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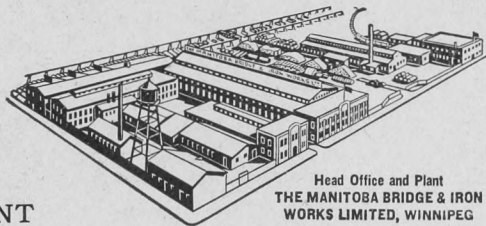
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It Is Christmas

One wanders down the main thoroughfare of a city. Men and women and children press on up and down the street or hurriedly shoot across. In front of the department stores there is a seething mass with hardly a break anywhere. With difficulty one gets through and carefully watches for a chance to leap into the revolving door and get inside. Above the heads of throngs of people milling about can be seen the rows of columns all freshly decorated. People push up to the counters bent upon making purchases more lavishly than at any other time of the year. The colossal commercial exploitation of the anniversary of a holy event has once more commenced.

The rush and hurly-burly of the Christmas season is on.

A few days pass by. A long procession. Sidewalks and the street boulevards on the line of procession are closely packed with children of all ages, some attended by mothers, fathers and older sisters. Eagerly they strain their necks to catch a first glimpse of what is coming. Santa Claus is here.

To the children Santa Claus is real. He forebodes an event which is equally real. It is a holy birthday but still it is a birthday and must be celebrated as such. So Santa Claus comes and gives presents.

Christmas is essentially a day of joy for children. It may lack the solemnity of the true religious celebration of the birth of Christ but to them in their genuine joy and wholesome frolicking it is a festival rather than a modern worldly celebration.

Christmas is approaching.

The streets are becoming a little more crowded; the pace, when not interrupted, a little faster. But on the occasional vacant corner lot Christmas trees stand in rows or line the fences. Their bases are supported by hardened snow, perhaps a little dirty from the dust of the adjoining street, but higher up near the tops are little clumps of the white snow which fell on them in the forest.

How truly emblematic of the holy event! The permanence of the evergreen, the purity of the white snow! The two blend into a picture more realistic than the artist could paint, more symbolic than the sculptor could hew.

White Christmas! Irving Berlin caught the spirit of a northern Christmas when he wrote and composed:

"I'm dreaming of a White Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know."

Christmas is close at hand.

We let our mind pass on to Christmas Day. Church bells have pealed; people have attended services or gathered by the fireside in their homes or in the home of some dear ones. But at some time on that very day or the evening before, each of us lets his mind, or is it his soul, wander back to the event itself. There he beholds the "multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Peace! Yes, He is the Prince of Peace. He sacrificed his life that man-

kind might be saved. And have peace. Thanks and gratitude fill our heart. A joy and happiness permeates our very being. There is peace, good will all about us. We become rested and are calm.

Christmas is here.

Suddenly we jump as if awakened from sleep. Was it thunder that rent the air or a bomb, an atomic bomb? We are still here. Or was it the subconscious mind emerging in the conscious? Reality, stark naked. A panorama of events since World War II sweeps across our mental sky: Iran, China, Palestine, Berlin; vetoes, cold war, Roosevelt's faith in humanity shattered.

How can there be a Christmas?

Are we mistaken? Were we awake before and is this but a nightmare? We look for corroboration, hope that we were wrong.

In the Encyclical Letter, issued from the Lambeth Conference, held in London last August, the truth is bared:

"Mankind has only recently escaped conquest by totalitarian states which deified their own power.

"It now finds itself threatened by the new menace of Marxian Communism which exalts atheism, puts supreme confidence in material progress, and proclaims its gospel with a militant enthusiasm which expects to conquer the world."

Atheism exalted! Conquer the World!
No, there cannot be a Christmas.

We draw heavily upon our Faith. That is a comfort but yet not a complete answer. Surely more is expected by Him, in whom we have that faith, than a supine acceptance even though it be with gratitude.

We all have confidence in the leaders of the West and would not hesitate to give of ourselves in their service should

the need arise. But that is an attitude altogether too passive at a time of impending peril. There surely must be something each one of us can do.

We grope about for light and direction.

In the life of the Master we see service, selfless service; sacrifice, sacrifice of that which is mortal in order that we, who are mortals, might have immortality. Such service is on a plane too exalted for us, poor humans. It would be blasphemy to say that we seek to emulate it.

"The highest of distinction is service to others." His Majesty the King, whose whole life is devoted to service which already has taken its toll, on the day of the coronation, spoke from the bottom of his heart and expressed a truth of which he is a living example. Direction is shaping in our mind.

Unselfish service, on the other hand, creates good will.

"Good will is the noblest and mightiest form of power. The men of good will are the mightiest persons." Here Rev. Charles Fletcher Dole, in one of his addresses before the Brooklyn Institute in 1906-7, reaches down to something very fundamental in the building of a society of peace and good will.

But one can find guidance in the world of commerce and industry, of human action in every walk of life. Dr. Napoleon Hill, in his recent book, "The Master-Key to Riches", refers to a conversation he had with the late Andrew Carnegie who had been questioning Mr. Hill as he sought to discover whether he qualified for a very important assignment. Mr. Carnegie said:

"It is my desire to know if you have in you a natural capacity for willingness to go the extra mile by rendering

service before trying to collect for it."

Dr. Hill continues:

"Then he went on to explain that the more successful men in all walks of life were, and had always been, men who followed the habit of rendering more service than that for which they were paid."

And he might have added that additional service, because of its selflessness, gives an added appreciation and feeling of worth of the daily tasks whatever they may be.

More service! Given willingly and freely. Perhaps that may lead to peace and good will.

The Star in the East can be seen faintly shining in the distance.

Discouragement creeps in. An atomic bomb. Thousands of lives snuffed out in a second and we may be there. Our Faith rescues us. Life is everlasting and it matters little how long or how brief the span of life on earth may be.

What can the individual do? His contribution must needs be so fragmentary and of the moment. Wordsworth removes our despair:

"The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew drops from
the sun."

But why the effort? We are selfish and something within us, be it good or bad, tells us we should expend ourselves to better ourselves. Elizabeth Barrett Browning provides the answer:

"Thou shalt be served thyself by every
sense
Of service which thou renderest."

The Star can be seen beyond yon distant hill.

Our mind is clear. What is needed is service, service that creates good will. We press on up the hill and seek to

reach the summit that we may see the glory beyond.

There are so many ways in which one can serve. That can be the privilege of the layman as well as of the spiritual leader, in matters small as well as in those of great import.

We all are resolved to perform our duties as Canadian citizens. We shall, indeed, fall far short if, outside of our chosen work which provides bodily sustenance, we, in an indifferent way, merely obey or rather do not break the laws of the land. There is diversity in Canada, misunderstanding and friction. In our own little world of Canada there is much need of good will.

Our minds pass on from the Canadian to the world scene. At this very festive time we crave for peace. But that desire must not find an outlet in a mere pacifism; it must be strong yet not militant, unswerving in its ultimate objective but charitable and full of understanding in method and approach.

Here is the greatest opportunity for service. We all can help mould the public opinion that is needed behind those who are called upon to lead us. Good will at home in all the freedom loving countries of the world expands, as the joining of the tributaries of a river, into a world good will of ever increasing strength which ultimately will create a united resolve which cannot be broken no matter what the sacrifice. Aside from the Power that comes from the beyond, that is the mightiest spiritual force that can be created to bring "Peace on earth, good will toward men".

We see the Star that has been shining for over nineteen centuries.

It is Christmas.

W. J. Lindal

Bishop C. Venn Pilcher and His Translations from the Icelandic

By PROFESSOR RICHARD BECK

Nations no less than individuals are known by their friends. In that respect the Icelandic nation has been uncommonly fortunate, for among its admirers, men and women who have taken a lasting and fruitful interest in its literature and culture, are many of the outstanding poets, scholars and spiritual leaders of the English-speaking world, past and present.

Among these, Bishop C. Venn Pilcher of Sydney, Australia, occupies a place of honor and distinction, especially because of his translations into English and interpretations of Icelandic religious poetry, in which field he has been a pioneer.

For us who are of Icelandic birth or extraction it is not only a matter of pride and gratitude to record and recognize the achievements of such friends of Iceland. Their example should be to us a challenge and an inspiration, a reminder of the fact that we are the heirs of a great literary and cultural heritage studied and admired by scholars throughout the world, although for the purpose of this article, reference has been limited to the English-speaking nations.

I.

Charles Venn Pilcher was born in 1879 in Oxford, England, where his father, the Reverend Francis Pilcher, was pastor of St. Clements Church. He therefore both came from an excellent family and grew up in a highly favorable environment, the cultural atmosphere of historic and scenic Oxford.

As might be expected, he began his studies at an early age, first attending

Charterhouse School and later Hertford College at Oxford University; he specialized in classical languages, philosophy, ancient history and theology. He received his B.A. degree in 1902, his M.A. degree in 1905, his B.D. degree in 1909, and was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1921.

Dr. Pilcher migrated to Canada in 1906 and became Professor of Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto, Ontario, also serving as one of the pastors of St. James Cathedral. He served in this twofold capacity for 30 years, or until 1936, when he became Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney, Australia. He still fills that high position of trust and leadership. That in itself is indicative of the reputation which he enjoys within his own church, which he has served so long and with such distinction.

Now a word about how Dr. Pilcher's interest in Iceland was aroused. According to his own testimony (in a letter to the writer of this article, dated August 22, 1941), the lessons in geography which his mother taught him in youth directed his attention to Iceland. In grateful remembrance, he dedicated his first collection of translations of Icelandic hymns (1913) to her in the following words: "To My Mother who first taught me the story of the Cross, and interested me in the People of Iceland."

He began learning the Icelandic language at the age of 15, studying it on his own account, except for some instruction, at a much later date, through correspondence with the late Dr. Jón Bjarnason of Winnipeg and

direct assistance from him during a short stay at his home in 1912. In the letter cited above Dr. Pilcher recalls with deep gratitude his sojourn at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Jón Bjarnason and also refers warmly to his other Icelandic friends in Winnipeg, notably Dr. Björn B. Jónsson and Dr. Rúnólfur



Bishop C. Venn Pilcher

Marteinsson. In his introduction to his first collection of translations, Dr. Pilcher also records his debt to Dr. Jón Bjarnason.

Dr. Pilcher had long cherished the hope of visiting Iceland, and in particular the places where the Reverend Hallgrímur Pétursson, the great hymn writer, had lived and labored, endured and conquered great adversity, and composed his immortal *Passíusálmar* (Passion-Hymns). This cherished dream of Dr. Pilcher's became a reality, when in the summer of 1921 he was in a position to make a short visit to Iceland. While there he was the guest of Rev. and Mrs. Sigurbjörn A. Gíslason, and he has high praise for his reception and for the country and the people generally.

Immediately upon his arrival at Reykjavík, he set out for Rev. Hallgrímur Pétursson's renowned parsonage, Saurbær in Hvalfjörður, the principal goal of his journey. In his introduction to the third collection of his translations from the *Passion-Hymns* (1923), he has recorded his impression of that memorable visit in impassioned and eloquent passages. They are both graphic description of the scenic beauty of those historic regions and an inspired tribute to Hallgrímur Pétursson, the man and the poet, his victorious living and spiritual triumphs.

Clearly, Dr. Pilcher's visit to Iceland has deeply stirred his imagination and enriched him spiritually. This is further revealed in his beautiful poem "Icelandic Memories", with which he prefaces his collection of translations just mentioned. These verses of his vibrate with genuine love and admiration for Iceland and the Icelandic people. The author is equally sensitive to the nearness of History, when visiting hallowed historic shrines in Iceland, as he is to the beauty and scenic grandeur of the country itself.

Dr. Pilcher preached in the Cathedral in Reykjavík, where Miss Ólafía Jóhannsdóttir (1863 — 1924), later widely known for her social and humanitarian work, served as his interpreter. Probably that association resulted in his later translating into English a story from her book *De Ulykkeligste* (The most Unfortunate, 1916 and 1921). Entitled "The Waiting Shadow", the translation was first published in *The Public Health Journal of Canada* (1926), later appearing in book-form in the United States.

In his letters Dr. Pilcher frequently recalls his pleasant visit to Iceland and his Icelandic friends on both sides of

the Atlantic. His sincere friendship for them and their country is always in evidence. Still more important, however, is the fact that his devotion to Iceland and things Icelandic found such a lasting expression in his translations, which have gained for Iceland new friends and increased respect in many lands.

It was only natural that Hallgrímur Pétursson's deeply felt and inspired hymns, marked by equal literary mastery, should strike a responsive chord in the heart of Dr. Pilcher, who is a man of strong faith as well as a learned theologian. Truly, he characterizes those hymns as "one of the most precious legacies" which the Icelandic people have received, and is fully aware of their great spiritual and cultural value to the nation, generation after generation. His translations from the **Passion-Hymns** reveal throughout that they are done with affection and care deeply rooted in genuine love of the task at hand. The same holds true of his other translations from the sacred Icelandic poetry.

His first collection of that kind appeared in London in 1913 under the title: **The Passion-Hymns of Iceland**. This was a selection of translations from Icelandic religious poetry, in all 32 examples by seven Icelandic hymn-writers from various times. Most of the translations were from the **Passion-Hymns** and of hymns by Bishop Valdimar Briem. Only some fragments from the former were, however, to be found here. Like the rest of the translations, they are carefully rendered, but suffer considerably by not retaining the original verse form. Those translations, on the other hand, where the translator has adhered to the original metre,

are the most successful, such as the stanzas from the famous Icelandic funeral hymn (also written by Hallgrímur Pétursson), "Allt eins og blómstrið eina" ("E'en As a Little Flower"), some of which are masterfully rendered and deservedly won high praise from qualified Icelandic critics.

In a concise and sympathetic introduction Dr. Pilcher sketched the career of Hallgrímur Pétursson and the other Icelandic hymn-writers represented in the collection, basing his account on sound sources as indicated in his preface. The collection also has a foreword by the Right Rev. H. C. G. Moule, D.D., Bishop of Durham, where he expresses his deep interest in the translations from the **Passion-Hymns** and the fascination which Iceland has held for him from the days of his early youth.

The translations were very favorably received in many quarters, and some of them have found their way into hymn-books in the English-speaking world. Dr. Pilcher's labors, therefore, did not by any means fall on stony ground, nor did he cease his efforts with the publication of this first collection of his translations.

A new and enlarged collection of translations from the **Passion-Hymns** was published in Toronto in 1921, under the title, **Meditations on the Cross**; it aroused interest and received highly favorable reviews. Two years later appeared his third and principal collection of such translations, **Icelandic Meditations on the Passion**, published by the well known Longmans, Green and Company of New York. It is a beautiful book, containing English selections from 31 of the **Passion-Hymns**, arranged as a series of meditations for each day of the month.

While Dr. Pilcher's earlier translations had much to recommend them, these later versions are far superior in terms of accuracy and poetic quality: in fact, these translations are often masterfully done. The translator's understanding of the Icelandic language is remarkable, not least in the light of circumstances, previously referred to, under which he mastered the language virtually by himself. He has entered deeply into the spirit and the mood of the Icelandic master-poet and possesses the necessary command of English ecclesiastical language to clothe the Icelandic hymns in fitting garb of corresponding vocabulary and similes.

Before he published this latest and largest collection of translations, Dr. Pilcher had made the trip to Iceland, described above, and it is safe to assert that the visit to Saubær in particular had been to him a challenge and an inspiration to continue his translation of the **Passion-Hymns**. He also received encouragement in that direction from another source, as generously stated in his foreword:

"If there is one Icelandic name above others which I should like to have the privilege of associating with these translations, it is that of the late Frú Lára Bjarnason of Winnipeg. It was the gift of an old copy of Hallgrím's poems, sent just before the final call came to her in a ripe old age, that moved the writer to further work on the hymns she loved. Almost with dying hand she wrote to prepare hospitality for him during his visit to Iceland. To have known her and her husband is an enrichment for life. I would also thank those friends and relatives of hers in Iceland, especially Herra Sigurbjörn Gíslason, Cand.Theol., and his wife, who made my stay in their home-country so happy".

In view of his generally excellent translations of the **Passion-Hymns** in his revised version, it is indeed a matter of gratification that he undertook the continuation of the work. He now adheres faithfully to the meter and the rhyme-scheme of the original hymns, and they retain remarkably well their Icelandic flavor in the translation.

Excellent written and penetrating is Dr. Pilcher's revised and expanded introduction about Hallgrímur Pétursson, and shows clear evidence of how profitable his visit to Iceland had been to him. The pilgrimage to Saubær had revealed to him in a brighter light both the personality of Reverend Hallgrímur himself as well as his mission and influence in the life of the Icelandic nation.

III.

The foregoing makes it amply clear that Dr. Pilcher has in an unusual degree lavished his fond attention upon Icelandic religious poetry and sacred literature from the latter centuries and more recent times. He has not, however, stopped there. He has also devoted his attention to the ancient Icelandic religious poetry, in particular that remarkable and beautiful poem **Sólarljóð** (The Lay of the Sun). This sonorous poem from the 12th century, which bridges the gulf between Heathendom and Christianity, is unquestionably one of the shining gems of Icelandic literature, whether considered from a historical or a religious point of view. This Dr. Pilcher has fully realized, and he has rendered the main body of the poem into English with rare accuracy and on the whole with great mastery. In so doing he has drawn on excellent and authoritative sources. In a scholarly and poetic introduction he surveys the history of medi-

eval religious poetry and shows how **The Lay of the Sun**, because of its sweeping and gripping theme and impressiveness, deserved to be called **An Icelandic Divine Comedy**. Under that title the translation was first published in **The Canadian Journal of Religious Thought** (1924), later reprinted in the translator's volume: **The Hereafter in Jewish and Christian Thought** (London, 1940).

The poem is composed in one of the common verse forms of the Eddic poems and Dr. Pilcher retains that metre in his translation; for that reason its flavor is more Icelandic also because the alliteration, characteristic of the Icelandic original, is likewise often retained. All the same the language of the translation is both smooth and in excellent taste. In general, the translation may be characterized by possessing in a marked degree imaginative quality and faithfulness, both with respect to language and thought.

Furthermore, Dr. Pilcher has just completed an English translation of another masterpiece from the realm of medieval Icelandic religious poetry, Eysteinn Ásgrímsson's **Lilja** (The Lily, from the 14th century), which has previously been translated into a number of languages, English included, and in Iceland has enjoyed such popularity and reputation to warrant the saying: "All poets wish that they had written **Lilja**." Generally considered a hymn of praise to the Virgin Mary, the poem, which consists of 100 stanzas, is written in the sonorous metre of the scaldic poetry, and is characterized by intellectual fervor, eloquence and mastery of form of the highest order.

Dr. Pilcher's translation, which the writer has read in manuscript, is fluent and generally very faithful to the meaning of the original. While the

internal rhymes and alliteration have of necessity had to be sacrificed by retaining the octosyllabic trochaic metre, the translator has succeeded in no small measure in re-capturing the sonorousness of the original, as well as its sweep and spirit.

In a recent letter Dr. Pilcher told the writer that he is gathering into a volume bearing the title **Icelandic Church Poetry** his translations of such Icelandic poetry in their entirety and that the manuscript already has been submitted to a publishing house in England. The collection includes his translation of "The Icelandic Millennial Hymn" published elsewhere in this magazine.

Dr. Pilcher's introduction to the translation of **The Lay of the Sun** as well as the translation itself reveals that he has made a study of Old Icelandic literature no less than the later religious poetry, and, what is far more important, that he has learned to understand the heart-core of that view of life which is the deep under-current of the ancient literature of Iceland. This appears in a still clearer light in his beautifully written and penetrating article on "The Norse Heroic Ideal in Icelandic Literature", which appeared in the **Jón Bjarnarson Academy Year Book** (1936).

Harking back to his visit to Iceland, he selects as his vantage-point the slope above Hlíðarendi, and describes graphically the magnificent view which greeted him as he stood there on an evening in early August, the scene of the dramatic **Njáls saga** spread out before him in the frame of the surrounding mountains and the Sea. Anyone who has shared that experience will readily agree with him when he says: "Over the whole region yet lingers the undying light of the Norse heroic ideal. The Saga has conquered time".

From this happily chosen vantage-point he surveys, concisely but effectively, Old Icelandic literature, culling especially from the sagas instances of the Norse heroic ideal personified and in action. That ideal he characterizes penetratingly as follows:

"It was a deeply rooted conviction of the northern mind that all things moved to an ultimate tragedy How then may a man conquer in this battle in which his ultimate defeat is inevitable? He may conquer, said the Norsemen of old, by the freedom of his will and by his indomitable spirit which meets the blows of fate, bloody but unbowed. More than this, the completeness of the victory of the human spirit is manifested by the grace, the aesthetic beauty, the gladness with which a man marches to meet his end".

Dr. Pilcher concludes: "Before the writer on a study table lies a small block of black lava picked up from the supposed tomb or howe of Gunnar at Hlíðarendi. It serves to recall a sacred spot where —

"Mid the gray grassy dales,
Sore scarred by the running streams,
Lives the tale of the Northland of old
And the undying glory of dreams."

For in that region, visible to one

sweep of the traveller's eye, lived and died men and women who had shinningly fulfilled the high demands of the Norse heroic ideal — men and women who were assuredly, in one respect of their character at least, not far from that kingdom which those alone can enter who obey the stern and challenging condition which makes victory the guardian of suffering, life the issue of death, the crown the fulfillment of the cross".

It is no exaggeration to say that in this article of his Dr. Pilcher interprets the Norse view of life with rare insight, and present-day descendants of those men and women of old who lived and died by that ideal can still find much to ponder in that attitude to the problem of facing life. The "undying glory of dreams" is, for one thing, still a worthy and desirable goal.

Dr. Pilcher has generously said: "I value very highly all my relations with Icelandic people and studies." It is a great compliment, considering the source. Obviously, on the other hand, we of Icelandic origin are the ones who are greatly indebted to him for his translations and interpretations of Icelandic literature, for having extended its boundaries, its reach to readers in many lands.

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Þjóðsöngur Íslands

Eftir MATTHÍAS JOCHUMSSON

Ó, guð vors land, ó lands vors guð!
 vér lofum þitt heilaga, heilaga nafn.
 Úr sólkerfum himnanna hnýta þér krans
 þínir herskarar, tímanna safn.
 Fyrir þér er einn dagur sem þúsund ár
 og þúsund ár dagur, ei meir,
 eitt eilífðar smáblóm með titrandi tár,
 sem tilbiður guð sinn og deyr.

Íslands þúsund ár,
 eitt eilífðar-smáblóm með titrandi tár,
 sem tilbiður guð sinn og deyr.

Ó, guð! ó, guð! vér föllum fram
 og fórnum þér brennandi, brennandi sál,
 Guð faðir, vor drottinn frá kyni til kyns
 og vér kvökum vort helgasta mál,
 vér kvökum og þökkum í þúsund ár,
 því þú ert vort einasta skjól;
 vér kvökum og þökkum með titrandi tár,
 því þú tilbjóst vort forlaga hjól.

Íslands þúsund ár,
 voru morgunsins húmköldu hrynjandi tár,
 sem hitna við skínandi sól.

Ó, guð vors lands! ó, lands vors guð!
 vér lifum sem blaktandi, blaktandi strá;
 vér deyjum, ef þú ert ei ljós það og líf,
 sem að lyftir oss duftinu frá;
 ó, ver þú hvern morgun vort ljúfasta líf,
 vor leiðtogi í daganna þraut,
 og á kvöldin vor himneska hvíld og vor hlíf,
 og vor hertogi á þjóðlífsins braut.

Íslands þúsund ár,
 verði gróandi þjóðlíf með þverrandi tár,
 sem þroskast á guðsríkisbraut.

The Icelandic Millennial Hymn

By MATTHIAS JOCHUMSSON

Translated from the Icelandic by Charles Venn Pilcher

*God of our land, our fathers' God,
We praise thine all-holy, thy glorious name!
Thy servants, the ages, thy diadem weave
Of the galaxy's star-dust and flame.
To thee is one day as a thousand years,
And a thousand years as a day,
A flow'r of eternity, glist'ning with tears,
Which, worshipping, fadeth away.*

—Iceland's thousand years—

*A flow'r of eternity, glist'ning with tears,
Which, worshipping, fadeth away.*

*O God, our God, a burning heart
We offer, as low at thy footstool we fall;
Thou, Lord, art our father from age unto age;
To thee with our voices we call;
We lift our thanksgiving for these thousand years,
For refuge but thee have we none;
We lift our thanksgiving, bedew'd with our tears,
As the wheels of our destiny run.*

—Iceland's thousand years—

*Like the frost and the darkness of morning, our tears
Shall pass 'neath the light of the sun.*

*God of our land, our fathers' God,
Our life is but fading and withering grass,
We die if thou be not our light and our life;
To the dust without thee we must pass.
Be thou, Lord, each morn the sweet spring of our life,
Our leader midst toil of the day,
At even our heavenly solace from strife,
The guide of thy folks' pilgrim way,*

—Iceland's thousand years—

*Increase thou the nation, and banish all tears!
We march to the dawn of God's day!*

Sketch of History of Early Icelandic Music

By LOUISE GUDMUNDS

When folk music is spoken of as belonging to any one nation, by that is meant, music which has been created by the nation with or without knowledge of the composer or era, also, music originally brought in from other countries which by long usage and spiritual conditioning, has become associated and identified with that nation.

Many folk songs have been long in evolving into the final product, while others again have been accepted quickly in their original form. Difficult and lengthy songs have been more apt to undergo several changes than short and simple ones. Some folk music travels from one country to another, such as when large groups of people emigrate, fasten their roots in new environment and sometimes become extinct in their former locality. An example is told of a Swedish melody travelling to Germany where it was adopted. Many years later it returned to Sweden as a German hymn with some revisions. Everyone knows that these migrations and revisions exist in regards to folklore, ancient poetry, plays, riddles, etc., and it exists none the less in regards to folk music.

It is long since the poets and educators have recognized of what bearing national poetry, national sagas and such learning has on each nation, and most civilized nations have preserved these. But folk music was deplorably neglected, ignored and held unimportant until these latter years when a strong wave swept the world to collect all folk tunes, — the melodies that everyone can master, — that everyone

likes to sing and can sing and play without much effort. Some of these simple songs have now been incorporated into large works such as symphonies and chorals. While this is excellent it is much more important for the composer, not only to be aware of his folk music and to employ it in various ways, but to be imbued with it, so he can transmit the spirit of his people through the medium of their characteristic tonalities into his creative or recreative works — in other words, return to his people in an enlarged form that which they have given him in simple form, or as the case may be, contribute to the cultural melting pot of a new nation, which would reflect on his forbears. In other words it isn't as important to utilize the folk-tunes as motifs, as it is to use their inherent atmosphere in new works thereby lending freshness that gives distinction. That is how we have French music, Russian, Scandinavian, English, Spanish, American. Why shouldn't they all be one? Their tools and equipment are the same.. What then is it that makes the difference? Life itself. That is: living conditions, — geographical and climatic conditions, — religious, political and economic conditions, — independence or dependence, repression or progression, — poverty or wealth, worry or carefreeness.

The interfusion of these conditions porportioned variously produces numerous atmospheres which in turn lean toward preferred scale structures indicating the philosophy and the innate character of the people.

In the land of plenty and ease we would not be apt to find much sad or

tragic music. In the land of despotism or tyrannical repression joyous songs are not predominant. In the land of poor soil and difficult climate we would not find light tunes. It is therefore imperative for the composer to study the individualism of his national music so he can contribute to the international order of the world, a vein which can be traced to its roots.

And so, has Iceland anything to offer to the rest of the world — that little island all by itself, hundreds of miles from anywhere — in the northernmost part of the Atlantic ocean and touching the Arctic Circle — about the size of the State of New York — with one of the smallest civilized nations in the world — a population of some 130 to 140 thousand? Can it be that this little nation has anything to offer to the rest of the world? Yes! Indeed it has. And now we'll see how, where and why.

I shall skim lightly over the eras, eliminating detail, touching only the highlights that tie up with the history of Icelandic music.

About 2500 years ago the Greeks combined the modes, thereby inventing the diatonic scale. Their scales descended only. One of these scales was the scale of F down to F without the B flat. Later they added the B flat to avoid the tritone. The tritone is the interval from F sharp to B flat. The tritone was troublesome and difficult and was considered impossible to sing, so they invented the B flat. Their music was built melodically only. They used no harmony.

Now we turn our attention to Rome in the 4th to the 7th century A.D., from the time of St. Ambrose to St. Gregory. Here we find the church modes which were gradually revised and combined into scales identical with those of the Greek scales but having the names of

the scales interchanged. Now the scale was ascending only, and now again the B flat was added to avoid the tritone as before. In this era we have the Ambrosian chants and the Gregorian chants.

Sometime between the 7th century and the 10th century, the first interval — the fifth — was discovered, presumably by the Norsemen. Rev. Bjarni Thorsteinsson says: It is thought by some Scandinavian authorities that the forerunner of Harmonic (a trade name of a reed organ, and Harmonic, meaning more than one voice) was built in the Northern countries. Most of the ancient instruments, belonging to the North, as we now know them, were so constructed that when a melody was played, a bass was heard either an octave below or a fifth below. Sometimes these voices alternated and at other times they were heard simultaneously. Actually they were overtones, or sympathetic tones caused by vibration.

Men have early begun imitating these intriguing sounds and that is how the first harmony was born. This type of harmony was called **Organum**, obviously indicating where it was derived from. No one knows when the practice of the consecutive 5ths was begun, — the **quint song** — the **tvísöngur** as we know it. This form of music spread throughout the European countries and was practised until it was replaced by more complicated harmonic structure, namely in Italy, Germany and France. Therefore it is a very long time since the quint song disappeared from these countries and in fact from most countries of the world.

Quint songs were sung in northern England and Scotland before or about the year of 1000. In the 12th century an English historian writes of harmony in Wales being of as many parts as

there are voices. But in Northumberland only two voices are heard; and that this kind of singing was brought in by the Norwegian and Danish vikings.

It is not surprising, says B. Thorsteinsson, that numerous musicologists have had confused and some, entirely wrong ideas regarding the *tvísöngur* — how it was constructed, where it originated and how old it must be, since many noted men do not recognize that it ever existed, and have said that it was impossible that any people ever sang that way. "These highly learned men, says Rev. B., have presumably not known that Iceland was on the globe." ("Þessir hálærðu herrar hafa líklega ekki einu sinni vitað, að Ísland var til á hnettinum"). At any rate they have concluded that the quint song was long since extinct if it ever existed. They have been entirely unaware that in Iceland, the quint song — *tvísöngur* — has flourished for over a thousand years and still exists although it has fast been waning. But like the Icelandic language it has been preserved in its pure form because of isolation. The oldest manuscripts of *tvísöngur*, are from the year 1473 and differ very little from the present day mode. These are written in the Dorian scale. Later ones are transposed into the **original** Lydian scale (the scale without the B flat), as that scale lends itself better to the consecutive 5ths. These scales, then, have not only been used in Iceland for 1000 years or more, but are traceable to the first scales of the church modes, about 400 A.D., and to the first Greek scales about 500 B.C., or 2500 years ago.

In spite of the fact that the original Lydian scale contains the tritone, which was called the diabolical interval and considered by the authorities, impossible to sing, the Icelanders went

blithely on singing this most difficult interval, blissfully ignorant that it was impossible. It is B. Thorsteinsson's conviction, based on his research work, that the Norsemen were expert exponents of the *tvísöngur* by the time of discovery and settlement of Iceland and that it was generally sung in the Norse countries, — that the Vikings sang this music wherever they went and brought it to Iceland at the time of settlement, — that it later became extinct in the Norse countries and elsewhere, but remained extant century after century in Iceland. The same applies to the *tvísöngur* as to the Norse language, which we now call Icelandic. Both were in general usage over a 1000 years ago in all northern countries; both were brought to Iceland with the pioneers; both became distorted, then gradually disappeared in those countries; and both were preserved on that isolated island, undergoing very little change to this day. Therefore, the Icelanders have the same right to claim the *tvísöngur* — quint song — as Icelandic, as to claim the language they speak and write as Icelandic.

Manuscripts show that in the middle ages three and four part music existed in Iceland, but from the 17th to the 19th century no evidence of it is there, which proves that the quint song was preferred.

As I have mentioned before, — the Greeks added the B flat; then the Romans added the B flat but the Icelanders never thought of adding the B flat until after 1850, when Ari Sæmundsen and Pjetur Guðjohnsen decided to modernize the scale. That was the beginning of the Major diatonic scale as we know it today. Of course other countries had been using it for a long time.

Tvísöngur was never played on an

instrument and to B. Th. knowledge never taught by note — only by ear. That no doubt is the reason for so much variance of tune. Now we come to *rímur*.

Rímur are definitely identified with Iceland and Icelandic culture, having originated in Iceland and no appearance of them existing in any other part of the world. Many of them are ancient. Shortly after 1300 this new form of chanting with a new form of meter sprang up. It was derived to a certain extent from the church modes, but the varied meters grew incredibly with the *rímur* as time went on. The subject is historic and is comparable to epic and ballad poetry of other countries.

The *rímur* were primarily intended for entertainment and as such they flourished throughout the ages until the 19th century. *Rímnakveðskapur* — *Rímn*-chanting (we could call it ballad-chanting) was not practised extensively in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century except, in the remote districts. Now the art is almost lost. It was brought to America by the early Icelandic emigrants and was kept more alive perhaps in its adopted land than in its land of birth.

For a long time the *rímur* were learned by ear. They were recited and chanted when the household gathered in the evening and at special functions and many could repeat them by the hour.

The oldest *rímur* the Icelanders know of were written about 1350 and consist of 65 stanzas. The first printing of *rímur* was in 1775.

In the 15th and 16th centuries *rímur* were chanted for dances.

The nation's thirst for knowledge was satisfied alternately by readers and

ballad-chanters. Now that is in the past — especially the chanting.

Many ballad-chanters were what we would call professional entertainers. Some were retained by prominent men. Others travelled from district to district. Records relating this are from 1400. In 1421 *Kvæða-Anna* (Chanting-Anna), an elderly woman, was able to loan 480 pounds of butter to the *Pingeyra*-convent. The opinion was that she had collected the butter as payment for her chanting. Several chanters are mentioned down through the centuries. They were always welcome guests and people looked forward to their arrival. By 1860 the custom began to dwindle. However even today, I am certain, in some remote parts of the country the practise still exists. And even here in America it still exists. My own father chanted day in and day out until a few years ago, and I know of middle-aged men out in the Icelandic settlements who still enjoy chanting.

The *tvísöngur* and the *rímnalög* are our own heritage — this is our forebears only folk music.

Since the establishment of the Icelandic nation to about 1900, its only music had been the *tvísöngur*, *rímnalög*, masses and hymns. To mention only one religious number which might be of interest; Thorlaks-messa (Thorlak's mass) was the first piece of music composed in Iceland, by an Icelander and for Icelanders at about the year of 1200. This was in melodic form only — no harmony used.

But we would know little of this were it not for the efforts of Rev. Bjarni Thorsteinson, who for 25 years labored at collecting all the *rímnalög*, *tvísöngvar*, hymns, masses and all data available. This compilation *Íslensk þjóðlög*, published 1905, has the greatest significance, — is the most valuable work the

Icelandic music world owns, and will serve as reference work always henceforth.

The man who comes second in my estimation as a musicologist is Jonas Helgason. He was first to publish a book or booklet in *Icelandic* on the theory and rudiments of modern music. Pjetur Guðjohnsen had published a book of three part hymns, but it was said to be incomprehensive until Jonas Helgason's *Theory* came out in 1874. Jonas compiled several booklets of songs of other countries. His first vol-

ume contained only 2 part songs — the following volumes gradually included three and four parts. He also composed a number of songs himself. Helgi Helgason, his brother, composed many songs. Both brothers were recognized by king and country for their work in spreading this culture. Rev. Bjarni Thorsteinsson follows the Helgason brothers next in line with the aforementioned *Íslenzk þjóðlög*, in 1905, and his hymn book, which is used today in our churches, besides many beautiful secular songs, of which his duet "*Sól-setursljóð*" is probably the favorite.

Ed. Note: — Iceland has made magnificent strides in the field of music during the last 40—50 years, especially in composition. In a future issue the Icelandic Canadian hopes to publish an article on that subject.

Seventy Years of Service

On Sunday, November 28, the First Lutheran church of Winnipeg celebrated its 70th anniversary.

At the morning service special music was rendered by the Junior choir, conducted by the choirmaster, Paul Bardal, with Mrs. Pearl Johnson and Erling Eggertson as soloists. Mayor Garnet Coulter, who was introduced by Mr. Lincoln Johnson, president of the congregation, brought greetings from the city. The pastor, Rev. V. J. Eylands, preached the sermon. The service was broadcast over CBW.

At the Icelandic service in the evening Rev. Dr. R. Marteinsson was in the pulpit and greetings were brought from the Icelandic Synod by the president, Rev. E. H. Fafnis of Mountain, N. D.

At the close of the service Rev. V. J. Eylands read greetings from Dr. Sigurgeir Sigurdsson, Bishop of Iceland, and Rev. Barni Jonsson pastor of the Cath-

edral of Reykavík, Iceland, together with greetings from the congregation at Selkirk and the Argyle Parish.

Following the service a fellowship gathering was held in the lower auditorium, and refreshments were served by the Ladies' Aids. Recordings had been made of the two services and portions of them were played during the evening.

From small beginnings the congregation of First Lutheran, founded by the Icelandic pioneers has come to be the largest of the denomination in Western Canada. It belongs to the Icelandic Synod, and the United Lutheran Church of America, and has been served by three ministers during its history.

The pioneer pastor was the late Dr. Jón Barnason, who served for 30 years till his death in 1914. His successor was the late Dr. B. B. Jonsson, who served till the time of his death in 1938. The present pastor, Rev. V. J. Eylands, B.D., was called in 1938.

PROF. SKULI JOHNSON:

Einar Hjörleifsson Kvaran in Winnipeg

A lecture delivered April 21, 1947, at the Icelandic Canadian Evening School

(Continued from Autumn Issue, Vol. 7 — No. 1)

14.

The occasional speeches and recitations by Kvaran during these years cannot be adequately chronicled; he was everywhere in demand. Early in the period we find him speaking about **Women's Rights**, April 6, 1888 (Lögb. I. 13, April 11) at a Sunday School Picnic (Lögb. II. 30, Aug. 7 1889); at the Göngumannagildi July 30, 1888 (Lögb. II. 31, Aug. 7); Kvaran gave a toast **Minni Kvenna**; he spoke at the new Lutheran Church in Selkirk (Lögb. II. Dec. 4 1889) and at a concert of the Daughters of Iceland Aug. 7, 1890 (Lögb. III. 6 Aug. 1890, where the admission was 25 cents for adults, 10 cents for children under fifteen). Kvaran's chief speeches at this time were however three, delivered on Feb. 8. 1889, Nov. 13, 1890 and May 18, 1891.

On Feb. 8, 1889 Kvaran was to lecture in the Lutheran Church on **Hérlent Líf** (Lögb. II. 4, Feb. 6, the admission fee was to be 10 cents). It was later declared that over 400 persons attended and that the lecture occupied an hour and a half (Lögb. II.5, Feb. 13). This lecture was subsequently printed by request (in Lögb. II. 12 — 15 and II. 17 — 19), occupying about twenty-eight columns, under the caption **Hverfum vér í sjóinn?** The major points in this celebrated lecture were: (1) Icelanders must be prepared to endure discussions and criticisms. (2) They must foster associations and social life with serviceable programs. (3)

Superstitions and irrational excitement masquerading as religion should be avoided. (The Kate Street Chapel has none of the good qualities of revivalism or of the Salvation Army). (4) Icelanders should be tenacious of the good characteristics they possess and also be open to good influences from life about them. (Icelanders have intellectual as well as physical characteristics that are important). (7) Icelanders need not have any inferiority complex (Local life is by no means ideal: there is no interest in science, poetry and the fine arts, there are no books of merit, no drama of quality; the three major concerns of Canadian society are politics, business and formal religion). (8) Laymen as well as the clergy can as observers, criticize the relation between religious institutions and social life. (In Winnipeg, there are Black Sundays, back-door entrances to bars, and the humbug of temperance tied up with religion).

On Nov. 13, 1890 Kvaran adverts to the same subject in **Afskipti vor af Hérlendum málum**, (Lögb. III. 45, Nov., 19). This was a lecture delivered at a concert in aid of the General hospital. The proceeds proved to be \$45.00.

On May 18, 1891 Kvaran delivered a lecture at a concert of the G. T. Lodge Hekla (Lögb. May 27): of this lodge Kvaran and his second wife Gíslína were among the founders. The subject of the lecture was **Hófdrykkja og Bindindisfélagsskapur**. Hekla had been established Dec. 23, 1887 at a

meeting in the Félagshús; "the eruption of Hekla". led to the establishment of Skuld by 43 dissentients from Hekla, Sept. 27 1888. Kvaran also revised the Handbook of Good Templars that had been translated by Ol. S. Thorgeirsson and Jón Júlíus.

15.

At this time Kvaran was of course immersed in Liberal politics. Feb. 15, 1892 he spoke at Grund on the topic **Íslendingar og Frjálslyndi Flokkurinn** (Lögb. Feb. 24, 27,) and on this occasion he was made an honorary associate of the Icel. Liberal association of South Cypress. He was already president of the corresponding organization in Winnipeg. To this post he was re-elected (Lögb. May 21, 1892) on which occasion he reviewed the record of the Greenway government. On July 23, 1892 he spoke again at a political picnic in the Argyle settlement (Lögb. Jul. 23). The next year he spoke in support of Isaac Campbell at North West Hall, (Lögb. Nov. 22, 1893). At this hall many Icelandic concerts took place; here Kvaran read at concerts and tombolas Dec. 15, 1894 and Jan. 15, 1895. Other occasions at which Kvaran gave readings are on record: (1) Kvaran read a story at the Hospital Concert Nov. 13 1890 and gave a speech as well (Lögb. III. Nov. 19); (2) He read a story at a Sunday School meeting at which also a poem, composed by him was sung (Lögb. April 15, 1891) (3) He recited at a concert of the Ladies of the Lutheran Church (Lögb. March 11, 1893). (4) He gave a reading at an Odd-fellows program April 26, 1893 and at a concert and tombola in the Unitarian Church Dec. 6, 1894.

Einar was active too in the entertainments of the Icel. Verkamannafélag in Winnipeg. An abstract of an address given by him before this society, Dec.

17, 1892 is on record (Lögb. Dec 21, 1892). In it Kvaran, among other matters, makes two important points (1) Icelanders should themselves become contractors. (2) They should keep peace with and have the good will of other local labour groups. On March 28, 1893 Kvaran took part in a lively debate in the Verkamannafélag, along with W. H. Paulson, Magnús Paulson, and Kl. Jónasson; the subject was **Women's Suffrage** (Lögb. March 25, 1893); it was well attended (Lögb. April 1).

Moreover Einar was exceedingly active in connection with the annual Icelandic Celebrations in Winnipeg, both in regard to the preparatory arrangements and the programs presented on such occasions. (1) Aug. 2, 1890 Kvaran delivered **Minni Vestur-Íslendinga** and contributed the poem **Vesturheimur** ("Önnur lönd með ellifrægð sig skreyta") (Lögb. III. 30, Aug 6). (2) For the program of June 17, 1891, Kvaran composed **Minni Vestur-Íslendinga** — ("Nú leggjum niður þref og þjark"), (Lögb. June 24). (3) In 1892 Kvaran was chairman of the committee that organized the program for Aug. 1st at Elm Park, with Páll S. Bardal presiding. Kvaran on this occasion contributed **Minni Íslands, Minni Vesturheims** and **Minni Vestur-Íslendinga** (Lögb. July 30). His speech on Iceland was published (Lögb. Aug. 3 1892). (4) To the celebration, Aug. 2, 1893 at which Árni Friðriksson presided, Kvaran gave the poem **Ísland** ("Nú andi vor lyftir sér austur um geim") as well as the **Toast to Canada** (Lögb. Aug. 5). On this occasion Kvaran was the moving spirit of the entire proceedings (Lögb., July, 22, 29). (5) Finally on Aug. 2, 1894 Kvaran wrote the **Poem on Canada** ("Þú mikla fold með fjöllin há"), (Lögb. Aug. 4).

16.

Two addresses delivered by Kvaran were of special importance for the Lutheran church. At the fifth annual synod meeting in Argyle, Kvaran lectured on the subject: **Hvers vegna eru svo fáir með?** This lecture, with some others were later separately published and sold by Sigtr. Jónasson. In some quarters this lecture earned for Kvaran the nick-name "The Priest's lamb". The other was a speech given at a concert in the Tabernacle, Feb. 19, 1895 (Lögb. Feb. 21, 1895). It was entitled **Tilsóknarafl og Frásóknarafl** ("Centripetal and Centrifugal Force"). The address was obviously designed to influence the congregation of the Tabernacle to return to the fold of the Lutheran Synod from which, under the leadership of Rev. Hafstein Pétursson, it had strayed. In fairness to Einar, it must be observed that he is here consistent: he always advocated unified effort by Icelanders in every field of endeavour.

Kvaran's last lecture was a farewell address entitled: **Vestur-Íslendingar**. — This he delivered in various Icelandic communities in Canada and the Central States during March 4 — 16, 1895. The chief points at which he lectured were in North Dakota and Minnesota, in the Argyle settlement, (and later in Selkirk, April 2), in the concert hall of Þorst. Oddson (Lögb. Feb. 14, March 28). It was subsequently published in Reykjavík as the author's considered evaluation of Icelandic achievements in the new land. It is a little classic of its kind.

17.

Kvaran rendered conspicuous service to his countrymen by the numerous reviews he wrote for the papers of which he from time to time was editor. In Lögb. such articles were usually headed

Nýkomnar Bækur or Íslenzkar Bækur sendar Lögbergi. Of these are Kvaran's criticisms of the writings of Gestur Pálsson, Torfhildur Holm and Gunnsteinn Eyjólfsson. Torfhildur Holm had been prominent in the Icelandic community for a number of years where she had contributed somewhat to its intellectual life; on her return to Iceland, she had begun her extensive output by the publication of a verbose novel **Elding**, based on some early Icelandic Sagas. This book Kvaran took severely to task (Lögb. III. March 19, 1890); in general Rev. F. J. Bergmann endorsed Kvaran's opinion (Aldamót IV. p. 132), regarding the compilation as mere trash. Gunnsteinn Eyjólfsson was a pioneer at Riverton. His detestation of Winnipeg life came to the fore in his short novel: **Elenora: Saga frá Winnipeg**, Rvík., 1894. This tale sordid and in construction not without blemish Kvaran criticized most scathingly, perhaps to excess. Gunnsteinn had a genuine contribution to make in story-writing as his **Góðar Taugar**, (1898) and **Þingkosningin** (1899) showed; he also had ability in music and in dramatics.

In his appraisal of the short stories of Gestur Pálsson, Kvaran is at his best as an appreciative critic. He reviewed **Sagan af Sigurði Formanni** (Lögb. May 23, 1888), and his **Þrjár Sögur** (Lögb. Aug 29, 1888): Kvaran rightly regarded **Tilhugalífið** as the best of these; it is more significant than **Grímur Kaupmaður deyr** and **Vordraumar**. None of these, however came up to **Kærleiksheimilið**, the master piece of the **Verðandi** publication. In later issues, Kvaran reviewed published lectures of Gestur Pálsson, **Lífið í Rvík**, (Lögb. Jan. 9, 1889) and **Mentunarástandið á Íslandi** (Lögb. Jan. 15, 22, in ten columns). When

Gestur Pálsson died, Aug. 19, 1891, (at the age of thirty-eight), Kvaran wrote an appreciation of his erstwhile comrade and literary rival (Lögb. Aug. 26, Sept. 1, 1891) which would have been perfect had not Kvaran dragged into it a gratuitous and unseemly reference to the relation between Gestur Pálsson and the publishers of Hkr. Kvaran's poem on Pálsson has already been mentioned: **Endurminningar**, (Lögb. October, 15, 1892) is written in a sincere elegiac mood. Sympathetic and sincere also was Kvaran's concise appreciation of another early associate, Bertel O. Þorleifsson (Lögb. III. Nov. 2, 1890) who had suicided; in it Kvaran assesses Þorleifsson's meagre writings and soundly selects **Heimfýsi** as his best original piece.

18.

Poems from the pen of Kvaran appear sporadically in Lögb. during his editorial time. (1) Wedding poem **In honour of the Rev. F. J. Bergmann and Guðrún Thorlacius**, April 15, 1888. This was sung at the home of Rev. Jón Bjarnason and his wife Lára where 30 — 40 persons were present, (Lögb. I. 14, April 18). (2) Wedding poem **In honour of Magnús Paulson and Guðný Jónsdóttir**, Nov. 9, 1892. (3) A farewell poem to **Einar Sæmundsson and his wife**, on leaving Winnipeg for Chicago (Lögb. Aug. 7, 1888).

Two obituary poems of this time were anonymously published in Lögb., both by the editor. (1) A poem sung at the burial of **Jónína M. Paulson** ("Senn vorið sér leikur") and (2) A poem sung at the funeral of **H. G. Oddson**, May 2, 1894 ("Vér kváðum æ með þér vorn kátinubrag"). Another piece, **Einurðarleysi** was published with the nom-de-plume "Bachelor" (Lögb. May 26, 1892); it later appeared

in Kvaran's little book of verse 1893; its date of composition probably falls in the period between the death of his Danish wife Matthildur and his marriage to his second wife Gíslína when Kvaran as he himself phrased it, was "milli kvenna". Other poems by Kvaran published in his weekly were **Jólin** (Dec. 24, 1890), **Vorvísur** (April 29, 1891), **Nýár** (Dec. 31, 1892), **Sigling Lifisins** (Jan. 11, 1893), and **Systkinin**.

Kvaran's little book of verse appeared in Rvík., almost simultaneously with a similar book by his confere Hannes Hafstein, in 1893. The two were therefore noticed together in reviews in **Sunnanfari** and **Aldamót**. O. D. (Ólafur Davíðsson) the reviewer in the former, makes much of the melancholy element in Einar's poems, and puts it down to the author's essential unhappiness in his western surroundings. Rev. F. J. Bergmann in his notice of the books in **Aldamót**, IV. p. 143, surmises that the mantle of Matth. Jochumsson will fall on the shoulders of Hannes Hafstein while that of Stgr. Thorsteins-son will fall on those of Kvaran: neither part of this prophecy was precisely fulfilled; indeed Einar never became an Icelandic poet of even the first flight.

19

Kvaran's translations during his Lögb. days were mainly prose. His versions of **Námur Salómons** (1888), **Þokulýðurinn** (1890) and **Allan Quatermain** (1891) were notable contributions to the popular "**Neðanmálssögur**" of his weekly. Imbedded in the last named are two poems: **The Song of Queen Sorais** and **The Sun Hymn**.

These translations were followed by **Kongurinn í Gullá**, translated from John Ruskin, which appeared serially

(Continued on page 49)

G. J. Guttormsson Honored



Guttormur J. Guttormsson

Over four hundred guests from various parts of Canada and the United States assembled in the Riverton Community hall, Nov. 14, to pay tribute to the Icelandic poet and dramatist, Guttormur J. Guttormsson, on his 70 birthday.

Toastmaster S. V. Sigurdson read a cablegram from Iceland announcing that the Icelandic government had conferred on Mr. Guttormsson the decoration of the Grand Knight Commander of the Order of the Falcon. Twice before the government of Iceland had honored him for his outstanding contribution to Icelandic literature. In 1938 he was invited to visit Iceland as the honored guest of the nation, and in 1939 he was made a Commander of the Order of the Falcon.

Mr. Guttormsson, who writes in the Icelandic language, has had published

four volumes of poetry and one volume of 10 plays. This year a special edition of all his poetry was published in Iceland and an author's subsidy was allotted to him by the government of Iceland.

The literary career of the poet was outlined by the guest speaker, Dr. R. Beck, University of North Dakota. Dr. S. O. Thompson, M.L.A., made the presentation of gifts which included a 10-volume set of rare books, book-ends, marble desk set, a purse and an easy chair.

Miss Stefania Sigurdson proposed a toast to Mrs. Guttormsson and presented her with a corsage and bouquet of roses, and a triple string of pearls and pearl ear-rings.

A reading of selections of Mr. Guttormsson's poetry was given by Mrs. H. F. Danielson. Rev. P. M. Petursson read a message from the Icelandic National league and G. Simundsson read congratulatory messages from Iceland and various parts of North America.

Original poems were read by G. O. Einarsson, E. P. Jonsson, B. H. Jakobsen, F. P. Sigurdsson, and L. Kristjansson. A musical programme was given by Mrs. T. R. Thorvaldson, Miss Evelyn Thorvaldson, Miss Margaret Toohey, Mrs. S. Sigurgeirsson, Miss Geraldine Bjornson, Mrs. E. Martin, and J. Palsson.

Others taking part in the programme were Mrs. F. V. Benedictson, V. Guttormsson, Rev. E. Melan and P. S. Palsson.

Following the programme the Riverton ladies served lunch to all those present.

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Guttormur J. Guttormsson was born

Nov. 15, 1878 in the pioneer settlement of Icelandic River, now known as Riverton, Man. His parents were Jón Guttormsson and his wife Pálina Ketilsdóttir, who came to Canada in 1875. At the age of eleven he lost his mother and five years later his father died.

After earning his living for several years at heavy manual labor, he homesteaded in the Shoal Lake district, and while there married in 1904 a lovely young maiden of that pioneer settlement, Jensína, daughter of Daniel and Kristjana Sigurdson, who for these forty-four years has been the embodiment of all that is good and gracious in a wife, mother and homemaker. They have five children: Arnheiður, Mrs. Fred Eyolfson and Pauline, Mrs. Earl Dahlman, both of Riverton; Bergljót, Mrs. Joe Sigurdson and Hulda, Mrs. Alex Clarke, both of Winnipeg; and Gilbert, at home.

In 1910 Guttormur bought back his father's original farm in Riverton and has farmed there ever since. To him this homestead is more than a piece of land, for it symbolizes the courage, faith and fortitude of the early pioneers who struggled against harrowing poverty and dreadful epidemics, and died in the faith that their hardships were not in vain, that the fruit of their labours would be a richer heritage for their children. And to these heroes Guttormur has raised fitting memorials in such poems as "Jón Austfirðingur" and "Sandy Bar".

Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, in his fine article on G. J. G., "A skald in Canada" calls him "the chief living Icelandic

writer in Canada" (since the death of S. G. Stephansson in 1927). And to those who know him intimately he is that and more. His great creative talents have found expression in more than poetry and drama. During his early years he became outstanding in the musical life of two pioneer settlements. Although mostly self-taught in music, as in literature, he learned to play the cornet and acquired such a remarkable knowledge of the other instruments of a band, that he organized and led a band in the Shoal Lake district; and later was the leader, for many years, of the Riverton band, which was considered a very fine body of musicians at that time.

He is a keen and sensitive observer of world events, a brilliant conversationalist, a generous and delightful host. His labours in the vineyard of the mind and in the agrarian sphere have been rewarded with an infinitesimal portion of this world's goods. Nevertheless, with the fine co-operation of his wife who has a gift for creating a charming atmosphere out of meagre means, and whose poise and charm seem never ruffled, he has managed to make his home a perpetual open-house for people of culture who come visiting from all over America and from Iceland.

To the people of New Iceland, of Winnipeg and further afield, he has been a fascinating and spontaneous entertainer at concerts and good-fellowship gatherings, where his inimitable humor and sparkling wit have been much appreciated.

H. D.

ICELAND'S THOUSAND YEARS

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count of 25% if 3 or more books are ordered. Send orders to: Mrs. H. F. Danielson, 869 Garfield St., Winnipeg.

Canadian Book Week

The custom of setting aside the first week of November each year for the observance of Canadian Book Week is now firmly established. This has had the effect of drawing attention to the often neglected but growing body of Canadian literature.

Book Week was observed this year from Oct. 30 to Nov. 6. It was highlighted by the exhibition of current Canadian literature in all fields by libraries, stores, social clubs and various organizations. Newspapers and periodicals gave prominence to articles dealing with the works of Canadian authors. More publicity, however, could have been given to the Book Week and some of the displays more carefully arranged to bring out clearly the Canadian production in various fields such as poetry and history.

What especially struck the observer at Canadian Book Week this year was the tremendously increased output of Canadian works of various types compared with the situation 10 or 20 years ago. In the words of William Arthur Deacon, a former president of the Canadian Authors' Association: "A single year's production now outweighs, in volume and merit, that of any decade before 1920". It is said that present output of general literature runs to over 100 works annually. Increased production would seem to have kept pace with growing consciousness of Canadian nationhood.

It is, of course, impossible in an article of this kind to deal adequately with even the most important products of Canadian writers in the past two or three years. One must be content with mentioning two or three works in the

fields of the novel, poetry and non-fiction.

First place would be assigned by many to those works which have received the Governor-General's awards. In the field of the novel the work to receive this coveted prize was the first novel of a French-Canadian writer, Miss Gabrielle Roy. In the English translation this bears the title "The Tin Flute". It is the story of a poverty-stricken French-Canadian family in Montreal. Such is the excellence of this work that in addition to the Governor-General's award it has received several other recognitions and prizes and Miss Roy has, through it, received the distinction of becoming the first woman member of the Royal Society of Canada, Section I.

An historical novel, "Judgment Glen" by W. R. Bird, National President of the Canadian Authors' Association, shared with E. J. McCourt's "Music at the Close", the Ryerson Fiction Award. The setting of the former is Nova Scotia in the late 18th century, of the latter the prairies in the early twentieth.

Manitoba authors produced at least two outstanding works of fiction. One of these, "Sarah Binks" by Paul G. Hiebert of the University of Manitoba won the Leacock Medal for Humor. The other, "Red River Shadows" by Olive Elsie Knox, is an historical novel treating of the Red River colony in the latter half of the 19th century. It should be mentioned that Laura Goodman Salverson's, "The Viking Heart" has appeared in a new edition.

The Governor-General's award for poetry went to Dorothy Livesay of

Vancouver for her "Poems of the People". Worthy of mention also is E. J. Pratts' "Behind the Log".

"Haida", the story of one of the Canadian destroyers which especially distinguished itself in the last war, won the Governor-General's Creative Non-fiction Award. The author of this book is William Sclater. For Academic Non-fiction the Governor-General's award went to Robert MacGregor Dawson's "The Government of Canada".

Of particular interest to Manitobans are the following recent works: "Colony to Nation" by A. R. M. Lower, formerly professor of History at United College; "This New Canada" by Margaret McWilliams; "Brave Harvest", the biography of the late E. Cora Hind by Kennethe M. Haig of the Winnipeg Free Press; "John W. Dafoe" by G. V.

Ferguson, formerly editor-in-chief of the Winnipeg Free Press; "The Unknown Country", a description of the Canadian scene by Bruce Hutchinson, associate editor of the Winnipeg Free Press and "Eleven Men and a Scalpel" by Dr. John Hillsman of Winnipeg.

It is to be regretted that the contributions to Canadian Letters in other languages than English and French are given little publicity through Book Week or by reviewers of Canadiana in general. Not that this would have made much difference as far as Icelandic productions in the last year or so are concerned for in both the field of fiction and non-fiction output has been almost negligible, although poetical works of some merit have appeared.

T. J. O. & H. Th.

Lundar Diamond Jubilee 1887 to 1947

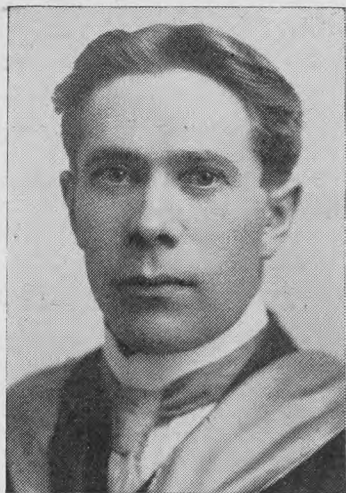
The book published by the committee in charge of the Jubilee celebration at Lundar last July, to commemorate that event, is just off the press.

It contains all the greetings, speeches and poems given at the programme of the day together with a variety of articles which give a great deal of valuable historical information about the district. These articles, in several sections each and written either in Icelandic or English are as follows: **Pioneers and Their Children**, by Paul Reykdal, Rannveig Guðmundson, Agust Magnusson and Allan Eyolfson; **Merchants and Enterprises**, by John Sigurjonson; **Craftsmen** by John Sigurjonson and Rev. H. E. Johnson; **Mun-**

icipality of Coldwell by Agust Magnusson; **The Jubilee Celebration** by Dr. R. Beck; **University Graduates** by Bjorn Stefansson, H. F. Danielson and S. B. Stefansson; **Teachers, Nurses and Students** by Paul Reykdal; **Community Life at Lundar** by Rev. H. E. Johnson; **Community Life at Shoal Lake** by Ljotun Sveinsson and **Anecdotes** by H. E. Johnson

Printed by the Viking Press Ltd., the book is 176 pages, paper covered, the format like that of the Icelandic Canadian. It contains 170 pictures, mostly of the old pioneers, and will sell for \$2.00 postpaid. For the present orders may be sent to Paul Reykdal, 979 Ingersoll St., Winnipeg, or John Guttormson, Lundar, Man.

Dr. Stefansson's Memory Honored



Dr. Jón Stefansson



Miss Martha G. Stefansson

A \$5,000 scholarship in memory of Dr. Jón Stefansson of Winnipeg has been accepted by the senate of the University of Manitoba.

Awarded by a daughter, Miss Martha G. Stefansson of Philadelphia, only surviving member of the family, the income from the scholarship will be used annually to purchase ophthalmoscopes for worthy students in fourth year medicine.

Until his death in 1936, Dr. Stefansson practiced medicine in Winnipeg as an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. An older half brother of Mrs. August Blondal, he was born in Iceland Aug. 10, 1878 and came to Canada in 1888 with his parents, Stefan Pétursson and Guðrún Jónsdóttir. By working as a farm laborer during the summer and fall months the ambitious youth was able to complete his medical course at the U. of M. in 1911, but only after having on more than one occasion dropped out for a year to earn additional funds. Later he took

post graduate courses in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin.

Always greatly interested and active in the progress of medical science, he did much to advance the work being done in his special field of medicine, and was successful in inventing a new method for the treatment of glaucoma.

Stefansson devoted himself to his chosen work with a true humility bordering on consecration, was to his patients a healer and a friend, and to his associates an esteemed and honored co-worker. He is remembered also for his valued contribution to the cultural and educational life of his community.

In 1916 Dr. Stefansson married Joanna Piliposkwa, a Russian coloratura soprano, who had appeared in opera in Vienna and other European centres. During the Bolshevik rebellion she fled along with her brother, an archbishop of the Greek Catholic church, to New York. Later she came

to Winnipeg where she met Dr. Stefansson. Mrs. Stefansson died in 1932. They had two children, Nicholas who died in 1939 at the age of 18, and Martha who with her generous gift has now honored the memory of her father.

After their father's death the child-

ren went to live with their mother's people in the U. S. A. and Miss Stefansson who is a graduate from Temple University, Philadelphia, as a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology, is now engaged in X-ray laboratory work in Philadelphia. She is also studying voice and piano.

The Sigurdson's Launch a Community Enterprise

Genial Mayor MacLean of St. Boniface snipped the scarlet ribbon and sent a ball rumbling down the alley. His wife followed suit on an adjoining alley, and the presidents of two bowling associations did likewise, while nearly two hundred assembled guests applauded.

It was Saturday evening, October 16, and the grand opening of the Coronation Bowling Alleys, built, owned and operated by Mindy Sigurdson and his family. As Master of Ceremonies, Arthur Morrison, radio sports editor, introduced Mayor MacLean and other civic leaders and sports celebrities. Then Mindy stepped to the mike and spoke for the Sigurdsons, thanking all those present for making the opening a success and promising that the utmost would be done to make bowling conditions ideal in the Coronation Alleys.

There seems to be nothing about the beautiful alleys that isn't ideal. Situated in Norwood, which is part of St. Boniface, and not too far from the heart of Winnipeg, they are a wonderful recreational contribution to the community, and were booked solid six months before the opening. There are

three floors of 8 lanes each, separately air conditioned, with sound proofing and fluorescent lighting. Each floor has a large lounge and spacious, well fitted powder room. There is also a board room, where local organizations have already held meetings, and a shining, streamlined snack bar on the first floor. The top floor is reserved for the family residence.

Sarah and Mindy Sigurdson have four children, two of whom are married, and all are involved in the Coronation Bowling Alleys. Pauline operates the Snack Bar, and young sister Pat helps her. Gwen is married to Mr. Roy Kinzie, who with John Sigurdson, shares with Mindy in the operation of the business.

Mindy was a builder and contractor for years and has always had a way with wood, so it's not surprising that these alleys and the home above them give an impression of beauty and honest strength of construction. He is brother to John Sigurdson, of the Sigurdson Mill Works in Vancouver, (see: Icel. Can. Autumn '47), and their two wives are sisters. All the millwork in the building was supplied by his brother's factory.

Hobnobbing With Hobbies

By CAROLINE GUNNARSON

BEAUTY IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

"Isn't that beautiful?" Mrs. Bjarnason exclaimed. "Look at the colors!"

Her companion's glance followed hers to the window of the train. "What's beautiful?" she asked without enthusiasm, "I can't see anything but weeds."

They were returning to Winnipeg from Gimli, and Mrs. Gudmundur Bjarnason (Dora to her friends) had found a wealth of beauty in the colorful spread of prairie "weeds" touched by a late summer frost. It was loveliness that defied verbal description, but captured by her inner vision, the picture would keep until she could garner odd moments from her busy days to confine it to canvas in oils.

Mrs. Bjarnason is blessed with senses that absorb the beauty around her and the urgent desire to express and share her joy in it in a tangible manner. In her home are oil paintings, often reproduced from tiny postcards, that have attained life-like reality because she has the artistic temperament capable of being stimulated by such commonplace things as picture post cards and casually spoken words and phrases. Such is the picture of Gullfoss that hangs in her living room. Visitors from Iceland have marvelled at its likeness to the famous falls and the true portrayal of clouds, sky and rugged surroundings.

There is also a beautiful picture of Holy Cross Mountain, its majesty softened into the white of mountain mist subtly changing into blues and greys and all the other colors that nature so often blends into a single picture.

Mrs. Bjarnason has been told that

she is particularly adept at painting mountain scenes, but there is no lack of feeling in her painting of a tiny homestead that might be native to any part of the world. A neat little shack stands at an independent distance from a protecting grove of elms, darkening from a bright, sun-warmed green to a deep shadowy green under a peaceful summer sky. When she visited at Grafton, N. D., she found this delightful scene outside her bedroom window, so she took it home with her.

Very quaint is her small painting of an old Icelandic snuff horn and snuff box lying on a table against a back drop of rich red.

As a very young girl, when her name was Halldora Johnson, she spent much of her spare time and money taking painting lessons from Frank M. Armington, who was Winnipeg's prominent art teacher in those days. Later he went to Europe and his works have been hung in the Art Gallery at Louvre, France, and in the Royal Academy in London. When Mr. and Mrs. Armington left Winnipeg they wanted to take a few promising students with them for an advanced course abroad. One of the chosen was Dora Johnson, but such a venture was financially far beyond the young working girl. She remained in Winnipeg and later became the wife of Gudmundur Bjarnason.

All through the busy years she has never abandoned her art. Her beautiful pictures have taken shape in odd moments snatched from work-loaded days, in the midst of rearing eight children and supervising a home that has always radiated generous hospitality through wide open doors. Strong

supporters of church, temperance lodges and many other good causes, the Bjarnasons have given freely of their time and resources to the community.

Mrs. Bjarnason also finds time to wield the needle, crochet hook and other homely instruments of art. She has a lovely crocheted bedspread, numerous fine doilies and dainty handkerchiefs, exquisitely embroidered luncheon sets and a rare old piece of battenburg she made when she was a young girl.

Mr. and Mrs. Bjarnason's eight children have all taken active part in Icelandic community life in Winnipeg. Ingibjorg sings in the choir of the First Lutheran church, Steinunn is an active member of the Icelandic Canadian Club. They live at home, as does their brother, Jon. Halldor, Lara, Solveig and Dilla are married. Dilla does a great deal of voluntary radio work at Yellowknife, where her soldier husband is stationed. Tommy, the youngest, is a veteran of World War Two. He has inherited his mother's talent and is at present taking a course at Meinzinger Art School, at Detroit.

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NEVER TOO OLD TO BE YOUNG

Upstairs, in a house on Agnes Street, lives Mrs. Kristin Johnson, a lady who is well known and well loved in the Icelandic community in Winnipeg. Her hobby is painting, and her joy is giving her dainty handiwork to friends and to the Ladies Aid of the First Lutheran church. Almost like yielding to a golden touch, these pretty treasures have for years lured many dollars into the coffers of that organization at their annual bazaars.

This interview was my first acquaintance with Mrs. Johnson, but having met her, I can readily understand why

so many people speak of her with warm affection. In her seventies, this kindly, frank-mannered woman has the eagerness to create pretty things which sets apart those souls that can never grow too old to be young. For how can a mind get around to growing old when it gives constant hospitality to bright and colorful ideas.

All about the room stood gracefully shaped clear glass vases, plates, jars and other novelties with roses, heather and rich green foliage in varying arrangements, blooming upon them by the grace of oils and Mrs. Johnson's nimbly wielded brush. Some were dry, some drying and some partly completed. — Lovingly fashioned, with a friend in mind, nearly all were predestined by their creator to take their places in certain houses. Her cushion covers, painted on black satin in rich floral design are very beautiful.

When Mrs. Johnson was younger, she liked to paint pictures, but they made very nice gifts and few are left to brighten the walls of her own home. There is, though, a picture of the moon shedding silvery beams on still, dark waters, a mountain scene and a little painting of still life. Then there is one that I fancy, of a dusky Indian maiden pensively dreaming beside a waterfall.

When she was a very small child, Mrs. Johnson came from Iceland with her father, Magnus Sigurdson. A young girl of eighteen, she took a few painting lessons from a Danish woman in Winnipeg, and it has been her hobby ever since. She could never give it up.

She is fond of music, and when she was younger she played the piano and guitar. At sixteen she joined the choir of the First Lutheran church and sang with that group without a break until she was twenty-five, when, as a young wife and mother, she occasionally had

to take time off. But on her seventieth birthday the choir felt the urge to celebrate, for Mrs. Johnson had been their loyal supporter for over fifty years, so they gave her a party.

She is the widow of Thorsteinn Johnson, a gifted violinist who performed and taught music in Winnipeg for thirty years. Their eldest daughter, Violet, was a musician of note up to

her death in New York seven years ago.

Mrs. Johnson has five children living. Edward, in Vancouver; Magnus Leonard, in Winnipeg; Mrs. Evelyn Hildal, Mrs. Anna Gibson, and Arnold, married to the former Betty Eyjolfson, daughter of the late Gunnsteinn Eyjolfson, well known writer and musician of pioneer days. They both teach music in Vernon, B. C.

Agnes Sigurdson Recital



Miss Agnes Helga Sigurdson

When Agnes Helga Sigurdson gave a recital sponsored by the Icelandic National League, at the Playhouse Theatre, October 14, she won the acclaim of the critics of the two Winnipeg dailies, and the approval of a large and enthusiastic audience.

S. Roy Maley of the Winnipeg Tribune calls her "virtuoso-poet of the piano", and says among other things:

"Art is long and the years of serious study were triumphantly indicated in the assured mastery of technique and authority of interpretation revealed by

the young artist in a program of exacting demands, comprising the same numbers she will play at her Town Hall debut in New York, January 15.

"Again Thursday, one heard the impeccable execution, the finely modulated tone which, even in fortissimo passages, never asked more of the instrument than it had to give, and, not least, the authoritative approach that bespoke artistry rather than mere piano performance.

"In lofty mood, she gave an illuminative exposition, based on scholarly foundation, of the Chorale in F. Minor, by Bach-Busoni, which was also touched with feeling that came from a responsive heart and understanding mind.

"There was lovely singing tone in Chopin's Impromptu in F Sharp Major, Op. 36, with fluency, grace and poetic feeling. The Polonaise in F Sharp Minor, was a decided contrast, with dramatic, richly hued pictures and intriguing stories vividly presented in tone painting".

F. A. Morriss of the Free Press remarks on her revealing "virtues of musicianship, taste", and goes on to say:

"Miss Sigurdson's tonal palette is a wide one. She is capable of a big, un-

forced tone and she can, when the occasion warrants it, shade it to a beautiful pianissimo. Indeed, the gradation and control which Miss Sigurdson showed Thursday night evokes admiration for the sound training she has been given. The large audience showed its approval in no uncertain fashion.

"The Bach Prelude at once gave the audience a taste of Miss Sigurdson's ability to get a large, singing tone from her instrument, as well as her fine sense of phrasing and dynamics.

The Beethoven was well played, and finely thought out, but it also disclosed the fact that the pianist has a certain "coldness" which will doubtless, disappear in time. When she can summon up more warmth and personality she will really astonish an audience."

Three years ago Miss Sigurdson went to New York to study with Olga Samarooff Stokowski and during the last year she has studied with Mme. Emma Boynet, who is assistant teacher to Isidor Philippi in New York.

Last summer Miss Sigurdson flew to Iceland where she gave three recitals in Reykjavik and Akureyri, and then spent the summer at L'arpege, France, studying with Mme. Boynet at her summer villa.

At the end of October Miss Sigurdson left for New York to resume her studies with Mme. Boynet and prepare for her New York recital at Town Hall, January 15.

Before leaving Winnipeg she recorded two recital programs to be sent to Iceland for broadcasting.

Club News

In honor of Mrs. Louise Gudmunds who is leaving soon for California, her music was featured at the opening meeting of the Club, Nov. 8, in the Good Templars hall.

Mrs. Elma Gislason and Elmer Nordal sang her duet "Visnar Vonir", and Mrs. Gislason sang Harmaljóð, Mamma Ætlar að Sofna, Dagarnir, Be Still, Song of Seasons, and Caprice. Accompanist was Mrs. Jona Matthiason.

Miss Thora Asgeirson, who has once again distinguished herself in the field of music, this time winning two scholarships, played two piano numbers, — First movement of Schuman's Sonata Op. 22, in G minor and Chopin's Impromptu in A flat major.

The president, Mr. Axel Vopnfjord, paid tribute to Mrs. Gudmunds for her fine participation in all of the club's activities, and especially her work in collecting original musical compositions of North American composers of Icelandic extraction. The large, appreciative audience took this opportunity to thank Mrs. Gudmunds for her good work in the musical field during her stay in Winnipeg.

Mrs. Gudmunds is returning to her home in California after staying for three years here with her aged parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nikulas Ottenson.

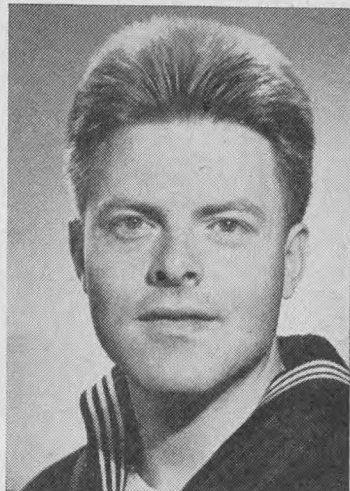
Her address will be 3039 Hillegass Ave., Berkeley 5, Calif.

OUR WAR EFFORT

Y 1/c U.S.N.R. PAUL F. REYKJALIN

Born at Mountain, N. D., April 1915. Enlisted in U.S.N.R. Dec. 1942. Served at receiving station, Pearl Harbor, Commander Service Force Pacific, advance base personnel administration, Hawaii, Naval training stn., Great Lakes, Ill.; Naval Personnel Separation Centre, Toledo, Ohio, Naval Separation Centre, Camp Wallace, Texas.

Son of the late Halldor H. and Margaret (Bjornson) Reykjalin, Chicago, Ill. U.S.A.



Y 1/c Paul F. Reykjalin

SQD. LEADER EINAR INGIBERG SWANBERGSON, A.F.C.

Born at Geysir, Man., Nov. 13, 1907. Was Pilot Officer in R.C.A.F. reserve force. Joined active service Jan. 27, 1941. Served with No. 1 Training Command in Ontario throughout service career on flying instructional duties. Awarded the King's Commendation Nov. 1943 and Air Force Cross Jan. 1, 1946. Discharged Mar. 7, 1945.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. Swanberg Sigfusson, Geysir, Man.



Sqd.-Ldr. E. I. Swanbergson

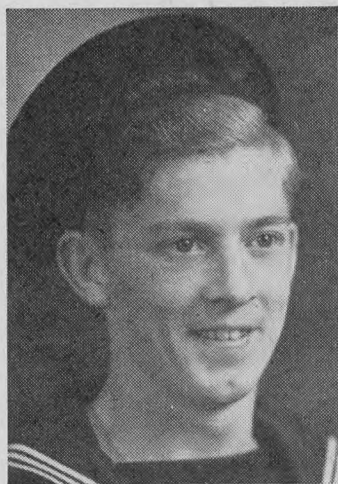
FLT.-LIEUT. ARNI ARNASON

Born at Gimli, Man., Jan. 26, 1919. Enlisted in London, Ont., June 1940. Received his wings at Summerside, P.E.I., Apr. 17, 1941. After taking an instructor's course at Trenton, Ont., he served as flying instructor at Aylmer, Fort William, Ont., and Saskatoon, Sask. Embarked overseas Nov. 29, 1943. Served overseas until March 30, 1945. Discharged at Winnipeg, June 30, 1945.

Son of Hlödver Ágúst and Anna Halldóra (Thorvaldson) Arnason, Riverton, Man.



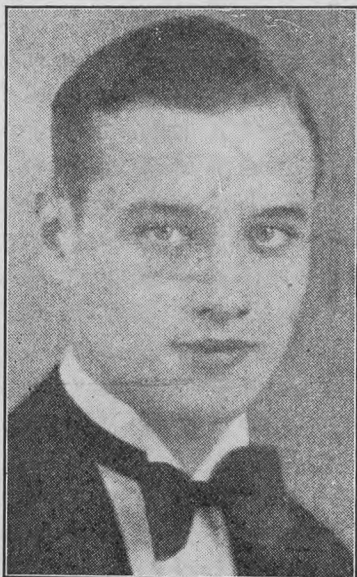
Flt.-Lieut. Arni Arnason

**A.S. GRETTIR MARINO SVEINSSON —**

Born Nov. 29, 1924 at Elfros, Sask. Enlisted in the Canadian Navy June 10, 1942. Trained at the West coast of Canada. Took a course in submarine detection at Halifax, N. S. Served 12 months at sea, mainly in the North Atlantic. Was discharged Dec. 1944. Was 7 months in hospital. Son of Mrs. Margaret (Hallson) and the late Marteinn Sveinsson, Elfros, Sask.

**L.-CPL. WALTER OLAFSON.—**

Born at Tantallon, Sask., May 3, 1907. Enlisted with Saskatoon Light Infantry July 4, 1940. Later joined Lord Strathcona's Horse (R.C.). Trained at Dundurn, Sask., Camp Borden, Ont., and Debert, N.S. Embarked overseas Nov. 1942. Served in England, North Africa, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Discharged Sept. 11, 1945. Son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Gudmundur Olafson, Tantallon, Sask.

**In Memoriam****L.-CPL. CLIFFORD MacDONALD ANDERSON**

Born at Winnipeg, Man., July 9, 1906. Enlisted with the Royal Canadian Engineers, Pioneer Battalion, Sept. 1939. — Trained at Toronto, Ont. He passed away May 22, 1940. He is survived by his wife, Ena, who has been an active member of the Icelandic Canadian Club, and one son Carl.

Son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Arni Anderson, Winnipeg, Man.



L.-Cpl. C. M. Anderson

**F.O. Jon Willmar Thorleifson****Petur C. Thorleifson**

F.O. JON WILLMAR THORLEIFSON—Born at Lögberg, Sask., Aug. 13, 1916. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. April 1942. Trained at Saskatoon, Sask., and other parts of Canada. Discharged 1945.

PETUR C. THORLEIFSON—Born at Lögberg, Sask., March 18, 1919. Enlisted in the Canadian Army 1942. Trained in Vernon, B.C., and other parts of Canada. Served in Italy and Germany. Discharged 1945.

Sons of P. C. and Ragnheiður Thorleifson, Vancouver, B.C.



TS Cpl. SIGURDUR MARVIN GUDMUNDSON—Born at Winnipeg, Man., June 12, 1924. Joined U.S. Army Nov. 18, '43. Spent 1½ yrs in So. Pacific and Japan. Awarded American Theatre Service Medal, Asiatic Pacific Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal and Victory Medal. Discharged April 24, 1946. Son of Gudmundur and Gudrun K. Gudmundson, Gardar, N.D., U.S.A.



PTE. JONAS BOGI JONASSON—Born Jan. 13, 1912 at Siglunes, Man. Joined the Canadian Army May 13, 1943. Served in Canada. Discharged Nov. 17, 1945. Son of the late Jonas Kristjan and Gudrun Guðmundsdóttir Jonasson, Siglunes, Man.

Six In One Family

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ABLE SEAMAN AS-GEIR EASY — Born at Ebor, Man., Jan. 2, 1922. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. June '41. Trained at Winnipeg, Man., and Esquimalt, B. C.

★

Sons and daughters of
Mr. and Mrs. (Ragnhildur Johnson) Easy,
New Westminster, B.C.
formerly Ebor, Man.



A.B. Asgeir Easy



Sgt. Alfred St. Jean Easy



Cpl. Thelma Easy



Miss Thora Easy



Pte. Inga Easy

CPL. THELMA EASY—Born at Renwer, Man., Nov. 18, 1923. Enlisted with C.W.A.C. 1943. Trained at Kitchener, Toronto, Ont. Stationed at Ottawa, Disch. Aug. 1946.

MISS THORA EASY—Born at Renwer, Man., Nov. 18, 1923. Went overseas 1944. Served with Canadian Naval Headquarters, London, Eng. Returned Oct. 1946.

PTE. INGA EASY—Born at Renwer, Man., 1925. Enlisted in C.W.A.C. 1944. Trained at Kitchener, Ont. Stationed at Vancouver, B. C.

SGT. ALFRED ST. JEAN EASY—Born in London, Eng., Feb. 5, 1917. Enlisted with Winnipeg Light Infantry June 1942. Transferred to Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders Sept. 1942. Was wounded in Normandy. Later at the Rhine sent to Echelon Canadian Army Headquarters. Discharged Dec. 1945.

LAC. H. H. EASY—Born at Ebor, Man., May 16, 1920. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. 1940. Trained at Winnipeg, Man. and St. Thomas, Ont. Stationed at Summerville, P.E.I., and Rockcliffe, Ont. Served overseas in 1945. Returned to Canada and is in the permanent force.

Snjolaug Sigurdson Piano Recital in New York



Snjolaug Sigurdson

When Snjolaug Sigurdson gave her recital October 14, in Brooklyn, N. Y. the following review was written by Russell Horn, New York music critic, and sent to the Icelandic Canadian for publication:

"Already heard some weeks ago in association with Pearl Palmason in the latter artist's violin recital in Town Hall, Manhattan, Miss Sigurdson brought her highly developed talent to Brooklyn and last night presented a well balanced programme of piano music at Hanson Place Auditorium.

...."The Bach chorale which opened the recital received impressive treatment at Miss Sigurdson's hands, and was followed by Beethoven's Sonata Op. 90. This was given a singularly cool and detached performance which led this listener to suspect that the pianist's objective approach to the work was deliberately chosen, so far as the opening movement was concerned. The verve and warmth projected by Miss Sigurdson in the finale were more effective by contrast.

"Four Brahms pieces came after, to complete the first part of the recital. Brahms is somewhat merciless in his demands, both technical and intellectual, and the Rhapsody, Op. 79 No. 1, can be only too easily made maudlin by the sentimentalist, or repellently severe by the unimaginative virtuoso. Miss Sigurdson escaped both pitfalls. She communicated the poetry of the composition and much of its fire. But it was in the playing of the Intermezzo Op. 116, No. 6 that the Canadian artist showed a real flair for Brahms. In the wistful and idyllic song which follows and is followed by an almost harsh tempestuousness, and which illuminates and mellows the whole work, Miss Sigurdson caught its delicacy and its nostalgia which Brahms so often and so unexpectedly enchants us with. It was a beautiful piece of piano playing.

"Hindemith's difficult Sonata No. 2 and the Pavane of Ravel call for nimble fingers and a grasp of musical architectonics. Miss Sigurdson demonstrated that she possessed both. To invest the Hindemith sonata with emotional appeal is something of a feat.

"The B. Flat Minor Scherzo of Chopin completed the programme. The same qualities in Miss Sigurdson's playing that gave interest to her rendering of Brahms were evident in the Scherzo. It is a work that will never become hackneyed: being a thing of beauty, it will be a joy forever. And Miss Sigurdson, last night missed none of its poetry.

"The artist's very attractive appearance, her poised platform manner, and her modest air added much to a very fine performance".

Russell Horn

Places Third in Miss Canada Contest



Ethel Christine Valgardson

Ethel Christine Valgardson, of Taber, Alberta, took third place in the "Miss Canada" beauty contest held at Hamilton, Ont., Aug. 12 and 13. The winner of the contest, Miss Jean Ferguson of Halifax, represented Canada at the "Miss America" contest held later in Atlantic City.

To enter this beauty contest Miss Valgardson journeyed the farthest of any of the 35 hand-picked beauties who competed for the honors. Previously she had won the title of "Miss Southern Alberta", being picked from among 14 lovely contestants at a pageant sponsored by the Lethbridge Junior Chamber of Commerce on July 1st. There she was presented with a bouquet of roses and the R. A. Raworth silver cup given for the first time this year. To enter the Canadian wide event she travelled to Hamilton by plane, accompanied by her mother, with all expenses paid. She was also presented with many gifts including a complete wardrobe, cosmetic sets, accessories and many other valuable it-

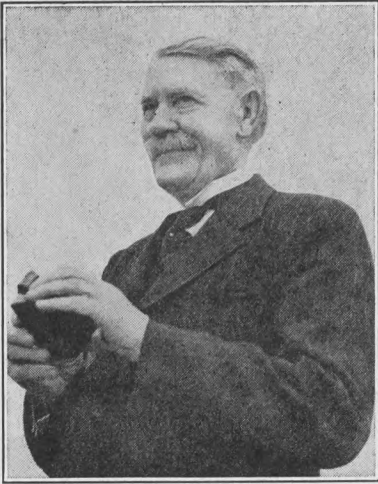
ems, all donated by Lethbridge merchants.

In the "Miss Canada" contest, the third Dominion beauty pageant, at Hamilton the girls were judged not for beauty alone, but for their general culture, poise, charm and talents: Miss Ferguson, is a radio singer, while Miss Valgardson is a pianist of note. Her award in third place was \$1000 scholarship to further her studies. In addition she shared the honors showered upon the contestants and was among the ten girls picked to take part in the show of radio and movie comedians, Olsen and Johnson, at the Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto.

Ethel Christine is a daughter of William Valgardson a well known farmer of Taber, Alta., and his wife May. Her paternal grandparents were Pétur Valgardson who came from Iceland to Spanish Fork, Utah in 1876, and his wife Kristín. They farmed in Utah for 20 years and Pétur was one of the missionaries sent to Iceland for the Mormon Church (Latter Day Saints). In 1903 he came to Canada, his family arrived a little later, and took a homestead near Taber, Alberta. Ethel's mother, May, is a daughter of Ingeborg (Ingibjörg) Sigríður Jónson, who was born at Hvammi in Langadal Iceland, came to Spanish Fork in 1876, and a year later married John Johnson who had come from Westman Islands, Iceland. May Johnson came to Alberta in 1907 and was married to William Valgardson in 1910. There are three daughters, besides Ethel, all of whom are married, and four sons.

Ethel is in her fourth year at the Utah State Agricultural College at Logan, Utah, her major subject being Interior Decorating. **H. D.**

He Refuses to Grow Old



A. S. Bardal

There was something very special about the eighty-two year old smile of Arinbjorn S. Bardal as, with his wife beside him, he conducted his family into the First Lutheran church Sunday, October 24. His ruggedly handsome head sat proudly on his broad shoulders and his tall, prepossessing figure was more erect than ever.

This was indeed a special occasion! By a miracle of planning he had managed to arrange for all their twelve children, whose homes are scattered far and wide on this continent, to come home for this day. It was a big surprise for Mother on her 68th Birthday. Incidentally this gave the whole family, together with a host of relatives and friends, a chance to felicitate with Emily Bardal who with her husband, Mike Sullivan, had come home from Seattle to spend two days of her honeymoon with 'Papa' and 'Mamma'.

As they sat in their accustomed seats in church, the seats that have seldom been empty during the forty-

eight years of their married life, an overflowing thankfulness filled the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Bardal for today they were, for the first time in many years, surrounded by all the children, many of the sons- and daughters-in-law, and several grandchildren.

Yes, they felt that their lives had been abundantly blest with good health, security, the joyous fellowship of many friends and, last but not least, this fine group of children, each successful in his or her chosen field of endeavor.

Rich, also, have they been in their service to the community. Mrs. Bardal who came from Iceland as a child of six years, was confirmed in the F. L. church and ever since has been associated with its work. For over forty years she has been a member of the Senior Ladies' Aid and one of its outstanding workers. In the work of the Lutheran Women's League she has served loyally and efficiently; and in every way she has been her husband's helpmate, and ever present support in his continuous work in the Temperance field.

As for Bardal, truthfully, one marvels at the abounding energy of this youthful octogenarian. At close to 83 years of age, he still goes curling regularly twice a week during the season, and is an outstanding bowler, being twice winner of his club's bowling events. He never misses the hunting season, and younger men may well look to their laurels in order to top his bag of ducks and deer.

An enthusiastic angler he is familiar with many of Manitoba's lakes and rivers. In order to roam freely far afield seeking the fisherman's delight he built

himself a trailer for his car, equipped with a bed and stove. He is interested in all the activities of his community, and the one thing he persistently refuses to do is to grow old!

But it is perhaps as the owner, for fifty-five years, of Bardal's Funeral Home that he is best known, and also for his tireless devotion to the cause of the Order of Good Templars. He joined the Icelandic I. O. G. T. lodge "Skuld" in 1889 and since then has been active in the Order. He first took office in the Manitoba Grand Lodge in 1908, and has now been Grand Chief Templar for over 25 years. He represented Canada in the International deliberations of the I. O. G. T. in Norway in 1914, in Denmark in 1920, London, Eng., in 1923, Philadelphia, U.S.A. in 1927, Sweden in 1930 and Holland in 1933.

On November 22, this year he rejoined with the Icel. lodges "Hekla" and "Skuld" when they celebrated their 60th anniversary.

Mr. Bardal has taken an active part in many other community projects. He was president of the First Lutheran church 1919 — 1921 and Manitoba Grand Master of the I. O. O. F. Manchester Unity in the year 1908. In 1926 he was elected councillor for the municipality of North Kildonan, Man., and for 17 years represented that municip-

ality until in 1942 when he moved into the city.

A. S. Bardal who came to Canada in 1886, was born April 22, 1866 in Svart-árkotí, Bárðardal, Iceland. His parents were Sigurgeir Pálsson and Vigdís Hall-dórsdóttir. His first wife Sesselja, died in 1899 and in 1900 he married Margrét Ingibjörg Olson. All their twelve children have taken professional or business training and three of the sons, Neil O., Karl L., and Paul S., the youngest, are associated with their father's business in Winnipeg. Also in this city are two daughters, Signy, a graduate of Success Business College, and Agnes, Mrs. H. C. Comac, a nurse.

The oldest son, Major Neil Ófeigur Bardal, is a Hong Kong veteran and was for three and a-half years prisoner of war there.

The other children are: Adalbjorg, Mrs. N. Jones, (a daughter of the first marriage), operates a private nursing home in Vancouver, B. C.; Emily, Mrs. M. Sullivan, Asst.-Supt. New Doctor's Hosp., Seattle; Svava, Mrs. A. Kerr, a nurse, Vancouver; Ósk, Mrs. S. Davis, New York; Helga, Mrs. C. W. Byers, Port Arthur, Ont.; Arinbjörn Gerard, Flin Flon; and Margret, B.Sc. in Home Ec. (U. of M.) and post graduate course in Social Service (U. of B. C.), engaged in social work in Saskatoon, Sask.

There are also eighteen grandchildren.

H. D.

Comes To The Front Again

Thora Asgeirson has distinguished herself again by winning two scholarships, which were awarded to her recently by the Department of Music at

the University of Manitoba. The Scholarships were the University Women's Club scholarship and the Effie Dafeo scholarship.

Young Icelandic Pianist in New York

On October 3, Rögnvaldur Sigurjónsson, young pianist flew from Iceland to give his second recital in New York's Town Hall. The following night he gave a concert in Washington D. C.

On October 19, 1946 Mr. Sigurjónsson gave his first Town Hall recital, but really made his American debut when he played at the National Gallery Washington, D. C., in 1944, following two years of study in New York with the eminent pianist Sascha Gornodnitzki. The music critic, Elena De Sayn, of the Washington Evening Star says of that recital:

"A piano recital which suggested the grandeur and virtuosity of by-gone days was given by the young and talented Icelandic pianist, Rögnvaldur Sigurjónsson last night at the National Gallery.

"Although young in years Mr. Sigurjónsson is already a master of different schools and periods which he presents authoritatively"

After describing in glowing terms the artist's handling of the various

works on his programme, she concludes by saying:

"It was rather surprising to find in an Iceland pianist Slavic warmth in the manner of interpretation and approach of Prokofieff's and Chopin's numbers. The recital was concluded with a stunning performance of Schumann's difficult "Toccata".

Mr. Sigurjónsson, born at Eskifjörður, Iceland in 1918, is the son of Sigurjón Markusson and his wife Sigríður Björnsdóttir, now living in Reykjavík. His mother's sister, Mrs. Sveinsína Berg lives in Tacoma, Wash. He is married to Helga, daughter of Gunnar Egilsson, who was for many years in New York city. They have one son four years old.

This brilliant young pianist has studied with Arni Kristjansson in Reykjavík, and Marcel Ciampi in Paris, and has given many recitals in Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. He is at present teaching at the Academy of Music in Reykjavík.

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Government Superintendent for V.L.A.

It was a pleasant duty to interview Mr. and Mrs. Julius S. Crawford of Ottawa in the charming living room of Dr. and Mrs. Backman on Garfield St., when they were in Winnipeg early in November.

Mr. Crawford was here to attend the convention of the Retail Implement

across the Prairie provinces and visiting district offices of Implement dealers from Winnipeg to Vancouver.

Mr. Crawford's long and varied experiences in the implement business fitted him well for taking his present position.

He was born on a farm near Winnipeg, his parents being the late Jakob Crawford (see *Icel. Can.*, Winter 1947) and his wife, Helga Thorsteinsdóttir. At the age of twenty he moved with his parents to Alberta, and ever since he has been associated with the implement business.

Mr. Crawford's first wife, Halla (Eymundson) died in 1936 and three years later he married Bernice Bailey. There are seven children. A son, Jack is engaged in advertizing for the Ottawa Citizen; two sons, Clare and Ralph are in the implement business and a daughter, Marjorie, is with T. C. Airways.

Tall and distinguished looking, Mr. Crawford has hitherto enjoyed excellent health, likes playing golf and shooting. He is also an ardent worker in wood-craft and has spent many happy and constructive hours in his well equipped basement work-shop.

But his present position is making very heavy demands on his energy, and the doctor says, "Ease up a little and curb your energy now and then". And Julius Crawford smiles contentedly and says, "That won't be so hard, for after all my family is my 'hobby'. And he looks affectionately at the charming and youthful looking Mrs. Crawford, who is such a vivid and vital part of the group although she sits quietly in the rocking chair and knits. **H. D.**



Mr. Julius S. Crawford

Dealers' Ass'n., where he gave an address showing progress in volume of settlement, and outlined future machinery requirements of veterans on the land.

Since the inception of the V. L. A. in 1943 Mr. Crawford has held the position of Superintendent of the machinery and equipment Branch of the V. L. A. for the Dominion Govt.; and he was on his way back to Ottawa after attending similar conventions

Scholarships and Graduates



Dorothy Mae Jonasson, a young Violinist, was awarded the Jón Sigurdson I.O.D.E. Scholarship at the Department of Music of the University of Manitoba.

Dorothy is the daughter of Sigurbergur Oscar and Laura (Borgfjord) Jonasson of Winnipeg (formerly of Riverton, Man.).

★

Among the scholarship winners announced at the commencement exercises of United College, held at the Westminster church, 29. Oct., last, was **Thor Thorgrimson** of 627 Agnes St., Winnipeg.

Thor won the Rev. J. W. Churchill scholarship of \$75.00, awarded annually to the student with the highest standing in Third Year Arts, whose course includes at least two of the following subjects: English, History or Philosophy.

A veteran with more than five years of overseas service, Thor was married in England in 1943 to Miss Pamela

Thomas of Topsham, Devonshire. — They have one son, Stefan Edgar.

Thor, now a student in Fourth Year Arts, is the son of Mrs. Sigrun Thorgrimson of 600 McGee St., and the late Rev. Adam Thorgrimson, of Lundar, Man.

★



Gudbjorg Eggertson, school teacher from Siglunes, Manitoba, was awarded the Ethel M. Lupton prize for having the highest aggregate marks in her grade in Theory (Counterpoint, Harmony and History) at the Manitoba University School of Music.

This work, which covers a number of years of study, was covered by her in 4½ months at night school along with her work of teaching school and studying voice and piano as well.

Miss Eggertson is the daughter of Mrs. Svanhildur Sigurgeirson, Siglunes, Man., and the late Eggert Sigurgeirson.

★

Sveinbjorn Eggert Peterson was awarded a \$100.00 scholarship at the Commencement Exercises of United College in Westminster church, Thursday evening, October 28, 1948, by the United Church Womens' Club, for Grade XI.

This scholarship was based on merit and good Christian character. The Isbister scholarship won by him in June was a forerunner to this scholarship.



Last June, **Petrina Louise Sigurdson** graduated as nurse from Wesley Memorial Hospital, Chicago, which is affiliated with Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. She is a daughter of the

late Tryggvi Sigurdson, formerly of Morden, Man., and Mrs. Pauline Sigurdson, now resident in Winnipeg. Miss Sigurdson is at present pursuing her calling in Chicago, doing private nursing.

★

Harold A. C. Johnson, U. of M. graduate, 1947, B.Sc., (Honors, and Kennedy prize in Geology) and awarded one of the \$450.00 bursaries in 1947, by the National Research Council, received his Master of Science (in Geology) from the U. of M. in November. His subjects were: **Major** — Economic Geology, and **Minor** — Mineralogy and Crystallography. His thesis was "Rock Alterations and Metamorphism at Cochenour Williams Gold Mine, Red Lake, Ontario".

Harold is the son of Prof. and Mrs. Skuli Johnson, Winnipeg.

★

At the twenty-second Autumn convocation of the U. of B. C., these students received their degrees:

Mrs. Bernice Roe Leydier, Master of Social Work. She is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bogi Bjarnason of Vancouver, B. C.

Arnor Kondrad Egilson, B.A., Vancouver, B. C.

Walter Charles Brynjolfson, B.A., Vancouver, B. C.

James Edward Thorsteinson, B.Sc. in Agriculture, White Rock, B. C.

YOUNG CELLIST

An interesting visitor from Iceland, **Erling Bengsten**, passed through Winnipeg last summer. He was on his way to study the Cello under the world famous Cellist and teacher, Piatigorsky, at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

On leaving Iceland he was awarded a \$10,000 subsidy for a two year course

at the above mentioned Institute, by the Musical Club of Reykjavík, Iceland.

When Mr. Piatigorsky came to know Erling and his ability as a rising Cellist he invited him to his home in New York and taught him during the summer without charge.

Erling is the nephew of Chas. Nielson of Winnipeg.

Einar Hjörleifsson Kvaran in Winnipeg

(Continued from page 26)

in Lögberg July, 29. Aug, 5 — 19, Sept, 9 — 16, 1891 and was then separately published.

Two other translations by Kvaran at this time deserve particular mention, one in verse the other in prose (1) In Lögberg Jan 27, 1892 Kvaran published a poem of Tennyson's. Kvaran called it **Rispar**. Tennyson's title is **Rizpah** and the piece was first published in 1880; its name comes from 2 Sam. XXI and the story is based on an incident which Tennyson found in a magazine called **Old Brighton**, about an old woman of Brighthelmstone groping for the body of her son at night in the Downs, who had been hung in chains for highway robbery. The theme evidently appealed to Kvaran, because it dealt with an outcast of society and had a sort of psychological interest. (2) The prose piece was one which Kvaran did superlatively well. It was the famous speech of Wilfred Laurier seconding Hector Langevin's motion of adjournment of the Canadian House of Commons on the occasion of the death of John A. MacDonald (Lögb. IV. June 17, 1891). It was one of Laurier's best rehearsed efforts and Kvaran in his version retains all the merits of its utterance.

20.

The crowning achievement of Einar in these years is his short story **Vonir**. It was written in 1888, read by the author on one or two occasions (Lögb., July 29, 1890) and later published in Iceland, 1890. Gestur Pálsson with his usual discernment recognized the importance of this story in his review, (published in Heimskringla IV. 41,

Oct., 9, 1890). It was almost at once translated into German (by Miss Lehmann-Filhes, 1894) and into Danish (along with Kvaran's story **Upp og Niður**, by Holger Wiehe).

This little story is very important in the development of Einar's mental powers, as he himself confessed (**Vesturför**, Akureyri, 1909):

"Among other things I had written **Vonir** there. I had flung myself down one hot June day after luncheon and had scarcely fallen asleep. Then I dreamt the main substance of the story especially the occurrence at the Immigration Hall. I suddenly awoke restless with desire to proceed to write this down and I began on the same day. I had other tasks to which to attend, but I nevertheless finished it on the third day. I marvelled at this speed, especially because the story was utterly dissimilar to everything that I had attempted to write before, and I was nearly thirty. I had then read little about psychology and nothing that is based on observations and experiments of psychologists of modern times". (p. 47).

"One thing I knew after those three days, that I was not prevented from doing what I desired most of all to do, but which I had at the same time doubted my ability to do — to tell stories. And I was as joyful as a child". (p. 48).

As this masterpiece of forty-five pages occupies a unique place in the literature of Icelandic immigrants to Canada, some effort is here made to reproduce the matter as well as the manner of it.

The arrival of the Icelandic immi-

grants in Winnipeg is Einar's dramatic *mise-en-scene*.

"Onward! Onward against the wind, sun-fraught, flaming-hot which breathes on the immigrant if he thrusts his head out of the window of the train. Onward, over the prairie immeasurable, infinite, full of peace, reminding of the rest eternal. Onward, to the land of wonder, the land of promise, the land where friends and fellow-countrymen await one, impatient to bid one welcome, to embrace one, to kiss one; the land where wealth and contentment and luck and liberty and honour await one, and leap into one's embrace as soon as one arrives, the land which the officials at home said was hell, but which the emigration agents said was Paradise! Onward! Onward!"

"And onward rushes the engine with all its tally of immigrant coaches behind it, hissing, panting and shrieking, as if it were attracting men's attention to the fact that they too can become tired on the prairies, and that life can lay hold of them unpleasantly, even though no governmental chains constrain them".

Everything is in commotion from restlessness and anticipation; the immigrants can nowhere stay still, none save Ólafur, lanky, and uncouth who sits still, as if he hears nothing and sees nothing. But he is not an insensate and thoughtless shore-rock in all this rioting surf of seething expectation; he is utterly overcome by the intensity of his feelings, for he has his sweetheart Helga to meet at the journey's end — his sweetheart to whom he had given all he had in the world — 130 króners to pay for her fare to America.

Now after arduously saving anew for two years for his own ticket, he was to join his plighted lass in the land of promise.

The description of the scene at the station at the arrival of the train is extremely vivid: the seething sea of life, the clamant antitheses; the new arrivals from the homeland, clumsy in their movements, and dressed like Icelandic farmers for a church service in a rural district on a winter Sabbath, and on the other hand, the Icelandic folk who greet them, arrayed in the new American mode, and thinking and speaking and behaving to some extent in accordance with their new environment.

When Ólafur sees his sweetheart he can hardly recognize her; her confusion at encountering her lover, this country clown, is so embarrassing, that she takes to flight. With native persistence, Ólafur goes in pursuit of her and when he overtakes her, occur brief and awkward exchanges. When Ólafur senses her perfidy, and in a panic seizes her by the hand, Helga shrieks at him "I detest you, you lubber, and if you do not let go of me in the twinkling of an eye, I will call the policeman and have you locked up". And with that she wrenched herself free from him and ran away.

Ólafur's shifting feelings at this betrayal are felicitously delineated and deserve to be reproduced in full. Finally he wanders westward out of the city, and comforts his soul in solitary child-like weeping. "There was no voice on the prairie, no sound, save the soothing tolling of bells, was brought to his ears from the city, for the sound of bells is borne further than any other urban din".

"The peace of the prairie took possession of him. The passions

dissolved and again coalesced like the cloud-clusters in the southern sky. And thereby they lost their poignancy and pierced him no longer. But instead it seemed to him that his breast inflated and bulged out as if it was going to break."

"And then he flung himself down on the prairie and wept, wept like a child, at first in hard squalls and with loud sobbing, then quietly, subdued and lightly. It was not courageous of him, but he did not need to be ashamed of himself. No one heard it, save the prairie — the prairie that henceforth was to be his only beloved, and is better than most sweethearts. For she makes men richer, while many a sweetheart makes them poorer; for she never turns her back on a man, for she is ever-young and ever-strong, and and never dies away from a man, but on the contrary, takes a man into her arms, when the man himself is dead, and embraces him to eternity; the prairie, immeasurable, infinite, which is full of peace, and reminds one of the rest eternal."

It would be tempting to go on now to consider a slender volume of five stories which Kvaran called *Smælingar*. Although these pieces were written in Iceland and some of them published there separately, they were brought together and published in Winnipeg by Ólafur S. Þorgeirsson, in 1908. Thus after two decades, was the cycle of co-operation between the first editor and the first printer of Lögberg finally rounded out. One of these is unique: *Góð Boð*; a reviewer in *Heimir* V. p. 120 called it the most significant allegory

that has been composed in Icelandic. My translation of this prose jewel is to be found in the *American-Scandinavian Review*. Vol. 8; 1920, pp.689-691. It is in miniature work of this sort, rather than in his full-length novels, that Kvaran achieves perfection.

21

But Kvaran's decade in Winnipeg is now over and I must bring my recounting of it to a close. The departure of Kvaran and his family was fittingly recognized by a farewell banquet in their honour. It was held in Delmonico Hall in Market Square and was attended by fifty-five men and women. It was given by the Lögberg Printing Company, with its president Árni Friðriksson presiding. W. H. Paulson read an address from the executive of the organization which was signed by some other persons as well. Kvaran was presented with a gold watch and a purse of \$235.00 (Lögb. April 11, 1895). On April 8 Kvaran and his family departed from Winnipeg; his departure from the station was attended by hundreds of men and women (Lögb. June 11, 1895). The family reached Iceland May 7, 1895 (Lögb. June 6, 1895). After that Kvaran visited Canada twice, as has been remarked earlier, and always took a deep interest in the doings of his fellow-countrymen, who dwell in America.

In retrospect the question must occur to one: Why did this leader, so popular and influential, so suddenly withdraw from the scene of his many and well-appreciated endeavours? A ready answer is not at hand but some consideration in respect to it may be advanced. One may brush aside the reason suggested by O. D. in *Sunnarfari* that Kvaran was tired of the bickering in the Winnipeg community.

Kvaran himself in his lecture on **Western Icelanders** is definitely inclined to minify the elements of discord in the Icelandic colony. In any case Kvaran, proceeding to an editorial post in Iceland, would be well aware that fierce bickerings were no less common in Rvík. than in Winnipeg. One may believe that Kvaran weighed this fact against his opportunity of becoming the associate editor of the best newspaper in Iceland (*Ísafold*) under the ablest editor of the 19th century — Björn Jónsson — who was the eloquent advocate of various reform movements so dear to the heart of Kvaran.

Further, one may conjecture that Kvaran came too old to Canada to become completely orientated there; he was a cultured European with no real liking for frontier life. In addition his health was never robust. During his stay in Winnipeg, two illnesses of his

are on record, in 1890 (Lögb. Aug. 13) and in 1894 (Lögb. June 16). Indeed after his return to the homeland, Kvaran spent a winter in the Mediterranean to recuperate. It was there, at Ajaccio in Corsica, that he composed his most idyllic story **Litli Hvammur** in which are imbedded two nostalgic poems on Iceland (1897). Although Einar had taken for his family-name Kvaran — the name of a Celtic king in Dublin whose sister **Ólafur Tryggvason**, King of Norway (Saga of Ó. T. Ch. 33) espoused — and had a considerable element of patrician pride in him, he always remained Icelandic to the core. His abiding advice to Icelanders in America was that they should serve well the land of their adoption, but never lose their Icelandic worthwhile characteristics. In this regard during his decade in Winnipeg Kvaran set a personal example which Canadians of Icelandic origin may well remember.

Lodges Celebrate

The Icelandic lodges of the I.O.G.T., "Hekla" and "Skuld", celebrated their 60th anniversary, November 22, with a concert in the I.O.G.T. hall, on Sargent Ave. A. S. Bardal presided, and the programme included a moving picture, musical items and readings of original verse

Speakers were, Dr. R. Beck, Dr. S. J. Johannesson and Dr. R. Marteinsson, who outlined the history of the lodges, whose workers, though now greatly reduced in numbers are still working loyally in the Order, and accomplishing much good in community activities.

The I.O.G.T. hall, which was built in 1905 by the combined efforts of the two lodges, had just been redecorated

inside and out, and is still owned and operated by them, entailing a good deal of voluntary labor.

Apart from their work in the temperance field the lodges have ably supported various social services of the community, and given generously to the Red Cross and other welfare organizations. All these things were remembered and remarked upon by the speakers, and by all those present. The two lodges have recently contributed the sum of \$2,000 to the Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature, now being established at the University of Manitoba.

Following the programme refreshments were served in the lower hall.

IN THE NEWS

ICELAND SHOWS THE WAY

Col. George Drew, Progressive Conservative national party leader, speaking at the opening of ultra modern additions to two suburban schools, Nov. 18, revealed to the large audience in the Broadview school auditorium that the new additions were the outcome of his unscheduled visit to Iceland late in 1943, when he was grounded there on his way back to Canada from Britain by air.

"There, in this 1,000-year-old city of Reykjavik, capital of Iceland, with all its ancient history and folk lore, I saw two of the most modern schools I had ever seen", the former Ontario Premier said. "They were constructed just before the war and contained every modern device then known — glass walls, good lighting, efficient heating — everything one could think of".

As a result of his Iceland visit, Col. Drew said, a committee which he set up as minister of education, studied the application of his newly acquired information to the design of new schools in Ontario.

The construction of the addition to Hilson and Broadway avenue public schools in Westboro was then launched under his administration. These embodied, he said, many of the features developed by this committee.

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WINS ESSAY PRIZE

This summer there was an elaborate celebration at Swan River to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the pioneer settlement in the Swan River valley.

In connection with the festivities, the Home Making School committee awarded a prize of \$70 for the best essay written about the event by a Swan River student. The winner of the prize was **Audrey L. Vopni**, and her essay was published in the local paper. Audrey is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Vopni, and a granddaughter of Jakob A. Vopni, who came to the district in 1898 and whose vivid description of his pioneering days there, "Homestead Experiences" was published in the Icelandic Canadian, Summer issue, 1947. This article was re-printed in the Winnipeg Tribune on the editorial page, Saturday July 12, 1947.

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Cornerstone Laid

More than a 1000 people attended the ceremonies of laying the cornerstone for the Old Peoples' Home last September, at Mountain, N. D., which is said to be the smallest incorporated city in the United States, its population being around 200 persons.

Governor Fred G. Aandahl gave the address of the day, and supervising the laying of the cornerstone was Gamaliel Thorleifson, now 83, who came to the community in 1891.

The structure will be 102 by 50 feet, will accommodate 40 inhabitants and five staff members, and will cost about 70,000. The Icelandic congregations of Hallson, Mountain, Vidalin, Peters, and Fjalla, all served by Rev. E. H. Fafnis sponsored the project, but contributions have been received from people of Icelandic descent in all parts of Canada and the States.

During the last year the little village of Mountain manifested its spirit of progress and co-operation, by undertaking another major community project, that of constructing a municipal water system. Suitable water sources were located a short distance away and Mountain was required to incorporate as a city in order to arrange for the system. Says Mayor M. F. Bjornson, "Mountain had barely enough people to meet the requirements of a population of 200 for corporation".

Water mains have been laid by the city, with residents having water brought to their homes privately. The system will be constructed to the Old People's Home. About \$16,000 of this \$21,000 project was borrowed from the

residents, most of whom subscribed to the loans.

Members of the building committee of the home are: F. M. Einarson, Alvin Melstad, Allic Magnussen, Gudman Jonasson, Einar Einarson, Joe Peterson, Ari Benson, Victor Sturlaugson of Langdon, secretary; and Mr. Fafnis, ex-officio member. Einarson was in charge of cornerstone program with Mr. Fafnis. Mayor Bjornson extended greetings. Music was furnished by the Langdon band.

During the afternoon luncheon was served by the combined Ladies Aids of the parish under leadership of Mrs. A. V. Johnson, Mrs. F. A. Bjornson, Mrs. B. J. Olgeirson and Mrs. H. J. Hallgrimson of Mountain; Mrs. Grant Swanlow, Mrs. A. Magnuson and Miss S. Goodman of Eyford; Mrs. J. E. Johnson, Mrs. Sam Johnson and Mrs. L. Johnson of Gardar; Mrs. William Vivatson, Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. Ed. Markel of Vidalin; and Mrs. Einar Einarson, Mrs. Wilfred Johnson and Mrs. S. K. Johnson of Hallson.

Food for the affair was donated by residents of the community, and proceeds were given to the building fund.

Choice of Mountain as location for the home was partially due to the fact that the community is the "home spot" of a large part of the country's Icelandic population. The Icelandic church at Mountain is the oldest on the continent, and was built in 1884.

The community was settled in 1878, by a group headed by Rev. Pall Thorlaksson.

LAYING THE CORNERSTONE



Gamaliel Thorleifson

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Kjarval Is Like That

Johannes Kjarval is a great artist in a country famed for the quality of its landscape painters and the quantity of their production.

Kjarval, now in his 60's, is one of the few artists with the genius for capturing the incredible colors of Iceland — the violets and blues and purples of the ocean and the fjords on a sunny day . . . the pastel greens of the Esja mountain range overlooking Camp Belmont and the area where so many American GI's and Canadians trained during the war.

Kjarval does not sign his landscapes.

"Who", he asks, "could fail to recognize a Kjarval?"

A friend of mine in Reykjavík has a massive Kjarval in oils hanging on his wall, a study of a brook flowing down a chasm in the volcanic lava.

It is unsigned, of course.

"And I dare not take it back to Kjarval and ask for a signature," my friend says sadly.

Like many men of genius, Kjarval has his eccentricities. You know what he might do?

"He would return my painting with a signature, right enough, but along with the signature he might add, say, a futuristic harp or a distorted and fantastic clock painted in directly below the waterfall. He does it constantly.

Along with the bold and vigorous canvasses that capture the fierce beauty of Iceland's mountains and glaciers, Kjarval applies his skill and fantasy and futuristic designs.

In this field he often paints directly from the tube, squeezing out the paint straight to the canvas and working in the design with the end of the tube.

Kjarval once was negotiating with a rich Iclander for the sale of one of his large landscapes. A truly fabulous price was offered.

Kjarval said he would think it over.

In the meanwhile, the scrub-woman at his studio chanced to bring in a pullover — a sweater — on which she had labored — just for Kjarval.

He was touched and wanted to do something for her. She wanted nothing: it was just a little gift made in spare time.

Kjarval finally insisted that she accept a painting. Any one she wanted. Hesitatingly, the old woman studied the landscape for which the fabulous price had been offered.

"I like that one", she said.

And that was the one she got, absolutely free.

Kjarval is like that.

Nat. A. Barrows

—From Free Press Prairie Farmer.



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